



the **CHRONICLE**

The Almost Monthly Publication of
the Ionia County Historical Society



Recent Programs —

Members and guests at the May 3rd meeting were educated and entertained once more by the members of the local band “Three Husbands on the Loose” plus Colleen Farrell. The quartet assailed the audience with a song from each decade of the 20th century (plus a couple of bonus tunes) and the story behind each one. While much of popular music is taken for granted, it is yet a reflection of the times in which it was written and popularized, and some of the stories behind hit songs are often surprising!

The songs presented were: Ol’ Stewball (first published in 1784); Come, Josephine, in my Flying Machine (1910); I Wanna Be Loved By You (1928); Blue Skies (representing the 1930s); Up The Lazy River (from the 1940s); Wake Up, Little Susie (1957); Wonderful World (1967); I Want You To Want Me (1977); Every Breath You Take (1983); I’ll Be (1998); and Ain’t Nothin’ Special (2008). A couple of bonus tunes were also provided by request: from 1969, “In the Year 2525” and from 1973, “Space Oddity.”



Past Events —

- Training for members interested in giving tours at the Blanchard House was held on Sunday, April 30. The training was presented by David McCord with help from Linda Ciangi, and eight members attended. Each received a “Docent’s Guide” describing room-to-room tour topics and items of interest in the house, plus historical background often shared during tours. We’re looking forward to more help in this area during our Summer Sundays and special events! Thanks to those who attended. If, for some reason, you couldn’t be there and still would like to learn how to conduct tours, contact David McCord.

- “Spring Into The Past” on May 6th and 7th was sponsored by the Tri-River Museum Network (of which the ICHS is a part). The Blanchard House was open from 11:00 until 5:00 both days as a part of that event, and volunteers welcomed two afternoons of steady guests from all across mid-Michigan. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the preparation, greetings, and giving tours.

Coming Events —

- The Upstairs-Downtown event is scheduled for Saturday, May 20, from 10:00 to 3:00. (See ad on page two.) There are ten buildings on the tour at this time, including a few new sites. Volunteers are still needed! Please call Kathleen Cook at 616.527.2626 or you can text her at 616.755.2423 if you can help in any way. Many thanks to our sponsors for this year’s event!



The special program for the June meeting will be a photo-tour of Goose Elliott’s journey along the famous “Route-66.”

FIRST NOTE from the Editor —

This is a hefty issue of the Chronicle! After I entered all the text - notes of meetings, reports of committees, details of project and such - it expressed one overall message: This is going to be one busy year for the Ionia County Historical Society!

That means, in part, that it will be a challenging year to keep in touch with all the latest news and developments. The Board of Directors, and myself (as secretary, editor, and webmaster) would like to encourage you to watch our website and Facebook pages for information. Be sure to look to the local media as well: WION radio and the Sentinel-Standard. We’ll do our best to keep you informed!

—David M.

• The ICHS will have a booth at the June 3rd car show on Main St. in Ionia. If you're available to help with that, please contact Kathleen.



• M1 Credit Union has organized a "Drive for your Community" event for June 10th. The ICHS has joined in the event by promising to bring a minimum of 25 people to test drive a new car during their event. The organization that has the most test-drivers will receive \$700 donation. Second place is \$200 and third place is \$100. There's no obligation to test drive a new car. (We sure could use the money!)



• June 17th will be a busy day, with many ICHS members involved in the Ionia Oz Festival, and the Ionia Farm Power Show will be at the Fairgrounds during the same weekend as well.



• Looking towards future programs, July bring the annual Independence Day pot-luck. As of this writing, we don't have a scheduled program for the August or September meetings. If you have ideas or requests for programs, please contact a Board member.

• The Annual ICHS "Antique Fayre and Sale" will be September 8th and 9th.

• The date for the annual "Spirits of Ionia" Cemetery Tour has not yet been set, but is tentatively scheduled for October 1st.

• October 4th is our annual meeting and election of two new Directors for the Board, after which we will welcome "Adam the Beekeeper" - a presentation sponsored by the Ionia Community Library. Our November 1st meeting will also be a program arranged with the Library.

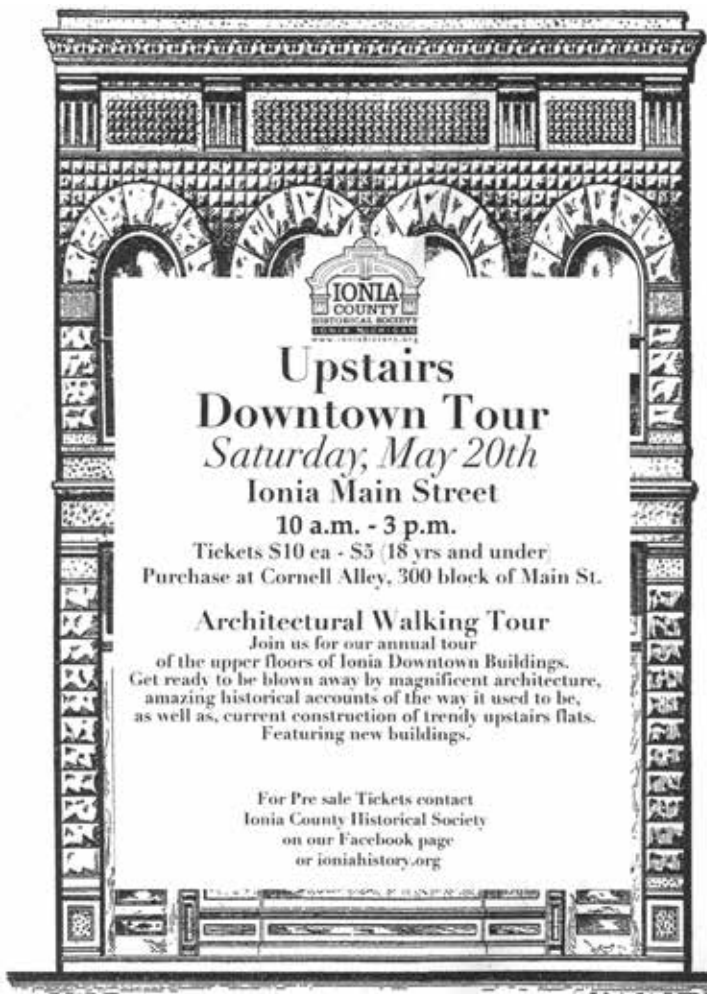
• On November 4th, the Friends of the Library (a committee of the ICHS) would like to host a Mystery Dinner event at the Blanchard House, and to share the income 50/50 with the ICHS. The Board is intrigued and

would like more information. (The projected ticket cost of \$50 per person was mentioned, and most everyone thought that was twice what it should be.) Contact a member of the ICHS Board (phone numbers on the back of this newsletter) if you'd like to join the conversation. More to come...

Business and Meetings of the Board —

The April 19 Board Meeting was held at the Lamplight Grill. It was a very special day, thanks to Rich Thompson (owner/operator of the restaurant) as he had promised a percentage of the day's income as a donation to the Historical Society! Thanks to the patrons, the Historical Society gained a \$125 donation. We were also treated to live entertainment from local singer Tom Ciganick, arranged by Jim & Gretchen Killion. (Thanks to Tom for taking an extended break in his show so we could transact a bit of ICHS business.)

The entire Board was in attendance, and several topics were reviewed and discussed during that time. Due to the amount of business requiring attention, the Board voted to have an additional meeting on Wednesday, April 26, to continue to address items on the agenda. Director Dave White was not present at this second meeting.



This record is a combination of notes from both those meetings. (Copies of the actual minutes of the two separate meetings are available on request.)

Topics of General Interest —

- Summer Sundays are fast approaching! The Blanchard House is open from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Sunday afternoons until Labor Day. If you can help by giving tours or being a “greeter” when our guests arrive, please contact Kathleen Cook and let her know what days you will be available.

- David McCord present members with a new ICHS T-shirt design that could be offered for sale in the gift shop. Vicki Kennedy at Promo Print & Stitches produced a sample and is ready to print a few shirts by request. No decision has been reached at this time.

- Also for the gift shop, a dozen new John C. Blanchard booklets have been produced and added to the inventory (which was down to just 2 copies).



- Several members participated in the Earth Day clean-up project at the Cornell Alley on April 22. The city has now erected a bronze marker on the site with a bit of history (see photo), crediting the ICHS for maintaining the alley. This puts the obligation on us, so please do what you can to help keep Cornell Alley looking good!

- Linda Ciangi said that the monument project to commemorate Governor Green and his business enterprises is still moving along. Most recently, she discovered that the Hanlon prison facility has a Cobra engine in their auto-mechanics training department. She’s hoping to arrange to show that at some point to help generate interest in the project.

- There was some confusion regarding sponsorship of the Upstairs-Downtown tour event on May 20th. An exclusive arrangement was negotiated without Board approval, and a motion was put forth by Goose Elliott to accept other sponsors for the event. After some discussion, the Board voted 3 to 2 to accept additional sponsors for the event, and Goose said he would pursue selling sponsorships. Kathleen would get in touch with the original sponsor to explain the situation.

Our calendar of upcoming events.

Wednesday, May 17, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House (open to all)

Saturday, May 20, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. — Annual Upstairs Downtown Tours, in downtown Ionia
SEE ADVERTISEMENT ON PAGE ONE!

Sunday, May 28, 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. — Summer Sundays - Public Tours at the Blanchard House through Labor Day weekend.

Saturday, June 3 — Ionia Cruisin’ Classics Car Show on Main Street Ionia (ICHS will have a booth)

Wednesday, June 7, 7:00 p.m. — A CHANGE!
ICHS Program at the Blanchard House, Goose Elliott presents a Road Trip on the famous Route-66

Friday, June 16 thru Sunday, June 18 — 16th Annual Ionia Farm Power Show at the Ionia Fair Grounds

Saturday, June 17 (all day) — The Fourth Annual Ionia Oz Festival (ICHS will have a Booth)

Wednesday, June 21, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.

Wednesday, July 5, 6:00 p.m. — The annual Independence Day Pot Luck at the Blanchard House.

July 14 thru July 22 — The Ionia Free Fair. The ICHS will have a presence at the Antique Village in the Floral Building, as well as a position in the Free Fair Parade on July 15th.

Wednesday, August 2, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS regular monthly meeting — Program to be announced.

Wednesday, August 16, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.

Wednesday, September 6, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS regular monthly meeting — Program to be announced.

Wednesday, September 20, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.

Sunday, October 1 — Tentative date for the annual “Spirits of Ionia” Cemetery Tour (Watch for details)

Be sure to monitor our Facebook Page for current information.

• This led to a discussion of the largely neglected Business Buddies program. This was originally developed by Rev. Bob Nixon many years ago, at one time including quite a number of supporting businesses in the area. According to the Treasurer, we only have a few Business Buddies on the role at this time. There was some talk about the rewards and benefits set up for these supportive organizations, and all those present agreed that it should be a valued part of our community connections. What's required is someone to take charge of the issue and try to expand the program. No further action was taken at this time. Contact a Board member if you are interested in helping with this or any other sponsorship program!

• We will welcome a tour group from Ann Arbor on June 21st. Linda Ciangi will host the visit.

• Kathleen Cook mentioned the notion of a policy as regards the number of volunteers required for rentals and liabilities when groups of guests are at the house. She suggested that we come up with a ratio of hosts-to-guests for events. No action was taken on the subject.

• At the meeting on April 26, Kathleen said that her dad, Dave, asked about Membership Cards for the Historical Society. There are some printed cards "from years ago" on file which could be used. Someone would have to add a name and expiration date to them, and monitor that process. No decision was made at this meeting.

• Sympathy for the passing of Marjorie Kernen in April, long-time member and friend to all.

The Blanchard House —

• Phil Kahl moved to purchase a new state flag for the pole at the Blanchard House (the current one getting faded and tattered). The Board settled on a budget of \$40 for the flag, supported by Goose Elliott, who said he would look into the purchase. However, after this meeting, ICHS member Bryan Kimble happened upon a deal for several U.S. flags and a new State flag, all of which he has donated to the ICHS.

• Barb Ehlert has received a bid for interior painting at the Blanchard House from Greg Cook. The bid was passed around the room, and discussion ensued. Due to the busyness of the upcoming weeks, it was suggested to wait until after the "Spring Into The Past" to do the job. There was also some mention of doing the painting by volunteers instead of hiring a professional, but the subject was not resolved at this meeting. Since the meeting, however, an anonymous donor has offered to pay for the repair and paint project. More to come...

• Linda Ciangi also noted that she will soon have an estimate for a new screen door for the back entrance to

the house from a Mr. Lapien. The income from the recent Appraisal Roadshow event will pay for that new door, as well as other maintenance issues at the House.

• Stonemason Denny Craycroft visited the Blanchard House to assess the status of the roof and chimneys, however he declined the project due to the slate roof. He recommended others for the job, and Kathleen is looking into it. We have leaks and deteriorating stonework to be concerned about.

• Greg Cook will purchase a new downspout (as mentioned in last month's newsletter). The installation of that downspout is still to be arranged.

• Linda Ciangi put forth a motion to purchase flowers for the pots and gardens at the front of the Blanchard House. Patty Simpson and Jane Horrocks estimated a cost of \$150, including grass seed and fertilizer. The motion was supported by Ally Cook and passed.

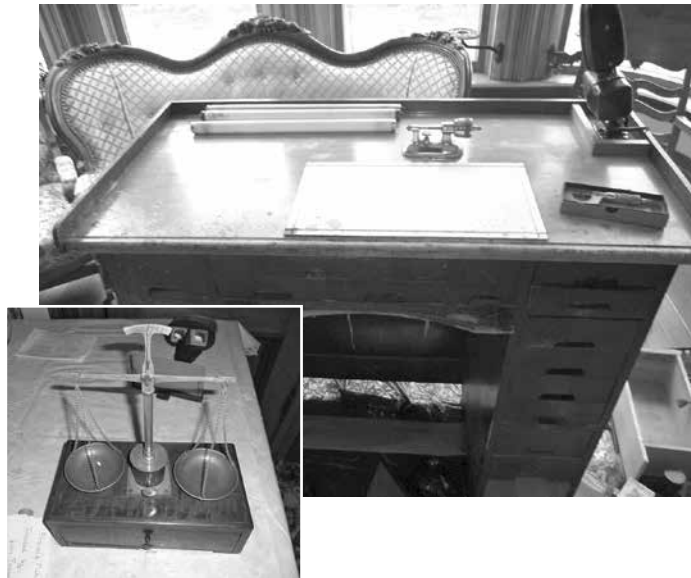
• There was a brief mention of hiring Clinger's to wash windows again at the Blanchard House, and bringing in Brooks Cleaners as well, but no action was taken on the subject.

Museum and Accessions News —

• Linda C. has put together a modest display of Ionia Chamber Ambassadors information, including several of their "red coats" and other memorabilia.

• The miniature buildings donated by Fr. Charlon Mason have been put in place, and were arranged just in time for Spring Into the Past. For the time being, the doll house is in the master bedroom at the Blanchard's and the church is in the tea room. The small barn is being stored in the Carriage House for now, and will likely be offered for sale at our annual yard sale in June.





SECOND NOTE from the Editor —

I've revised the way I present information in the newsletter a little bit, hopefully improving the readability of the information. It's no longer a straight reprint of the meeting minutes, but a paraphrase of those minutes, plus other relevant information, to bring the readers up to date on the news and activities of the Ionia County Historical Society. I'd be happy to hear if you have noticed, and if you like this format.

The minutes of each meeting are still maintained and filed in the Secretarial records, and copies can be had on request (as legally required).

I hope you like the "Wayback Machine" sections. Those are fun to put together!

Another thing that I have considered is to organize the information into "departments" based on the ICCHS committees in charge of each item. That brought to light the fact that we really need more help with our committees. You'll notice that most of them are chaired by Board members. It would be preferable if non-Board members could take the reigns in some of these areas.

Here is a list of committees recommended within the bylaws of the ICCHS and the chairman of each committee at this time:

- The Rental Committee - Barb Ehlert
- The Housekeeping Committee - Barb Ehlert
- The Gift Shop Committee - Shawna Hoekstra
- The Programs and Events Committee - Allison & Kathleen Cook
- The Membership / Business Buddy Committee - Allison Cook
- The House and Grounds (Maintenance) Committee - Dave White
- The Museum Committee - Linda Ciangi
- The Accessions Committee - Mary Kimble & Shawna Hoekstra
- The Finance Oversight Committee - Kathleen Cook
- Newsletter & Website - David McCord

The Treasurer's Report —

Briefly: once again expenses were greater than income over the past couple of months. The income included an unexpected donation of \$79 from "Live Local" real estate. Income from recent events amounted to less than \$1,000, but the annual insurance bill arrived in late April amounting to \$1,070, and the water bill from the city has gone up since last year.

• The jeweler's bench and tools (shown above) along with other tools of the trade are now set up on display in the museum downstairs in the Blanchard House.

• The subject of renting additional storage space for ICCHS artifacts was tabled for the April 19th meeting, and a special meeting of the Board was called for Wednesday, April 26, to make some decisions. At that meeting, which was held at the Ionia Sentinel-Standard facility, much discussion ensued about the situation. The cost (at \$400 per month) for the Sentinel's space is of great concern to some. Linda C. is confident that she can raise the money, with support of funds from the DiDazzio donation. Meanwhile, the urgent need for storage space prompted Goose Elliott to move that the ICCHS arrange to rent the space offered by S&K Printing (at \$33 a month) for three months. This, he said, would provide for the immediate need while allowing more time to consider the commitment for the Sentinel's offer. This motion was supported by Linda C. and the Board passed the motion. Members of the Board now have copies of the contracts for both offers to study further, and the topic will be on the agenda for future meetings.

• In light of the S&K Storage agreement noted above, several items (as approved by the Accessions Committee) have since been moved into that storage area in preparation for upcoming events. We can now breathe a little easier and move about better with the extra space. There is more to come on this topic, to be sure.

• The Carriage House continues to be a catch-all location for "stuff" - but now that weather is getting better, hopefully we can begin to make better use of that building and reorganize the contents there. Eventually the Carriage House can be restored to look like it actually looked in the 1880s (at least on the first floor). If you're able to help, please contact a Board member!

THE WAYBACK MACHINE...

Something different for this month's issue: Miscellaneous Happenings in Ionia County 1867 (150 Years Ago)

The Lyons dam was first completed in 1860. It was a "timber and brush" dam. A flourmill, which previously had been operated by steam, was moved to the site of the dam. H.B. Libhart, who operated one of the early sawmills of the county and who manufactured most of the lumber for the pioneers, was interested in the dam for a time and owned altogether eight shares. The ownership changed from time to time until 1867, when J. Hale of Ionia acquired twenty and one-half shares, the village of Lyons owning the remaining interest of thirteen and one-half shares.

In Danby Township there was a village known as Cornell that was laid out in section 19 by Pierce G. Cook, an agent for Elizabeth Cornell of New Jersey. It was platted April 11, 1867, and contained ninety-six lots. Cornell village never attained any size itself and soon ceased to exist as an individual town.

The board of county supervisors incorporated Lyons village under the general law, January 6, 1859. In 1867, a legislative charter was obtained and the village was reincorporated, and under that act the village has since then continued to have its legal existence. The first village election under the new charter was held at the town hall the first Monday in March 1867. The whole number of votes cast reached seventy-four.

Dr. B. M. Hutchinson became the fourth physician to practice in Lyons, arriving in 1867. Also in 1867 the village of Pewamo received its first resident physician — Dr. Lafayette Jones, who remained in service to the village until 1876.

In 1867 there were six school districts in Ionia County and one "fractional" district, reporting in the aggregate three hundred and fifty-three scholars.

The Portland Observer (or rather Advertiser as it was then called) was established in the summer of 1867 by J.H. Wickwire. After issuing seven issues of the paper, he sold the plant to Joseph W. Bailey. Shortly after Mr. Bailey took charge he changed the name of the paper to the Observer, by which name, it is still known.

H. R. Wagar, of Ionia, appeared at what is now Lake Odessa and negotiated with Samuel Chapman for the purchase of his farm on the banks of Jordan lake. Wagar was a shrewd dealer and got it cheap. It soon became

general knowledge that the new railway was going to overlook the neighboring village of Bonanza. Wagar platted the farm in 1867 and named it Lake Odessa, after Jordan Lake and Odessa township. He gave yard facilities and a depot site to the railway and, by using his influence, brought the rails through his new village. The population of Bonanza began to shrink immediately and eventually faded away completely.

In 1867, Ross Starkweather built a steam-powered sawmill at the village of Palo, thus attracting attention from other business-minded folk as well. That same year, Ira Winegar was installed as the new Palo postmaster, and Palo Lodge No. 203, Free and Accepted Masons, was organized.

In 1867, William A. Knott built a gristmill in Belding, operated by Knott & Smith. It employed water power, was furnished with "four run of stone, and had a capacity for four hundred bushels daily.

The village of Hubbardston was also first incorporated in 1867. The first village election was held in Sever's Hall on Monday, March 18 of that year.

In 1867, Mr. Hewitt opened at the "Corners" the first store at "Campbelltown" and the West Campbell post office was established there on Dec. 16 with Isaac Gibson installed as postmaster.

Alfred Stearns became postmaster at the South Boston P.O. in December of 1867.

Several township boundaries were adjusted during this year as well, including the limits of North Plains, Lyons, and Ionia.

General Kidd was appointed register of the land office at Ionia in 1867.

In the year 1867 and part of 1868 the Ionia Church of Christ held their services in the Union Hall, over the Stevenson store, while they were building their new church near the town square. Ionia's "German Baptist Church" was also organized in this year, alternately known as the First Brethren Church and the Dunkard Church.

A State Constitutional Convention was held at Lansing in 1867, convened on May 15 and adjourned on August 22. Ionia county was represented in this convention by George W. Germain and Sanford A. Yeomans. Hampton Rich, of Ionia, served in the state Senate, during the session of 1867 representing the twenty-eighth district.

Edwin S. Yeomans was born September 19, 1867 on the family farm. He was the son of Sanford A. and Marietta Yeomans. His parents were members of the original Dexter colony that settled Ionia, and he later became president of the Ionia County National Bank.

In Saranac, the Union Evangelical Church was organized on Aug. 21, 1867.

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.

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!



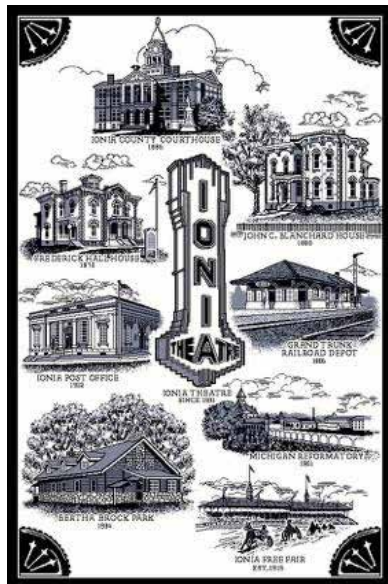
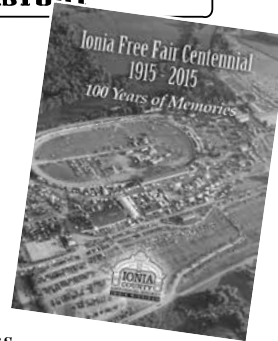
The newest addition to our collection of Ionia County memorabilia, the masterwork for 2016:

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!



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

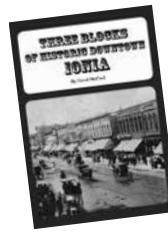
1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"

1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary

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

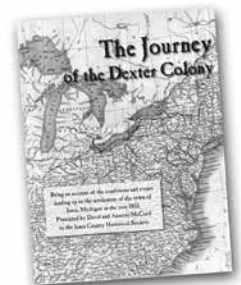
DVDs are available for \$10 each!

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)



ALSO AVAILABLE:

Reproductions of historic Ionia publications —

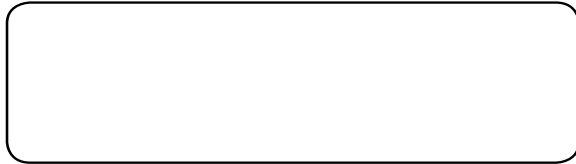
- 1887 "Headlight Flashes" Special Ionia Edition
- 1907 Ionia Souvenir Book
- 1973 Ionia City Centennial Program Book
- Antique Ionia Postcards



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
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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>