



## A Firefighter's Tale

Our September 6 presentation was a history of Airport Fire Departments by Bryan Kimble. His presentation began with a history of firefighting in America, starting with the colonial period, and tracing the profession through the 1800s. With the advent of "flying machines" in the early 1900s, crashing aeroplanes became a new challenge - fighting aircraft fires is much different than fighting structure fires. Airport firefighting became a more specialized profession.

Bryan related the specific history of the Grand Rapids airport, based on his career at that facility for over 35 years. From a few outdated fire trucks to one of the most advanced departments in the industry, he showed photos of the latest firefighting vehicles at the airport.

Through humorous (and mostly true) stories, he shared insights into the life of an airport firefighter, including their continuous training, daily routines, and responsibilities. Thanks to Bryan for a great presentation!

(Above is pictured a 1911 steam-powered pumper. Below, Bryan on the steps of Air Force One, and a picture of one of the powerful trucks in use at the Ford International Airport in Grand Rapids.)



### Past Events:

- The Duck Race at the Bertha Brock Park Fall Festival was a great success. Chairman Katie Mooney reported that 350 ducks were funded, and she's got some ideas to improve the event for next year. Several ducks were lost (floated downstream past the finish line).

- The annual Yard Sale was also a success, bringing in \$350 and moving lots of items out of storage. Barb Hogan is assessing the value of items remaining to decide what to keep for future sales, what to throw out, and what to give away.

- September 26 — The ICHS co-sponsored the Library's program—Teresa Irish's presentation "1000 Letters Home" at the First Christian Church.

- September 28 — The Tri-River Museum Bus Tour to Mecosta County Museums was sold out. The trip included four different museums and historic sites.

- As always, many thanks to all the volunteers who made these events happen on behalf of our organization and our mission!

### Future Events:

(Be sure to check the Website and Facebook for current information.)

- October 1 — The annual "Spirits of Ionia" Cemetery Tour at Highland Park (see ad for details).

- October 4 — The ICHS Annual Meeting / Election of Directors, plus a program sponsored by the Library: "Beekeeping 101" with Adam Ingras of Bee Wise Farms. Refreshments will be supplied by McCords and Kimbles.

- October 6 — At the Lyons-Muir Historical Society, David McCord will present a program on the life of Chief Cobmoosa and related pioneer information.

- October 18 — The monthly ICHS Business Meeting with the new Board of Directors will be held at the Blanchard House.

*Continues on page two*

Holiday Tours. Hosts are needed for the usual 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. visitors.

## Sept 20 General Business:

- The Tri-River Museums guidebook is being put together for 2018. The ICHS will have our usual listing in the book, which brings many visitors to our door, and great publicity for Ionia. The organization is growing: new members this year are Vestaburg and Lakeview.

- The question was asked “Are we members of the Historical Society of Michigan’s Michigan History Alliance?” We do not believe so, but McCords will check on this and any other organizational affiliations the ICHS might have or has had or should have.

- The Library is conducting a survey of their patrons on the future of the institution. All ICHS members are encouraged to complete the survey, either on-line or at the Library in writing. The results of this survey could have an impact on the Historical Society as well, owing to our close relationship with the Library and the historic significance of their building.

## Sept 20 Committee Reports:

- Accessions— A box of artifacts and documents has been collected which should go to other area museums. (The Board reviewed these items after their Sept. 20 meeting and approved the plan to pass them along.) The fate of a very large 1890s bible was discussed; the book is in extreme disrepair, shows no relevance to Ionia, and has no resale value. It was agreed that many of the full-page illustrations could be pulled out and offered for sale. Shawna H. will pursue that task, and is authorized to take the book to her home to do so. Bryan K. noted that the Accessions Committee needed some funds for supplies (storage boxes), and also noted that the committee is preparing a short report for the general membership on the importance of proper preservation practices.

- Membership— Ally C. reported that she is working on a Business Buddies letter, with input from Kathleen C. and Goose E. She has a mailing list of 60 local businesses to send the letter, and requested postage from the Treasurer to cover that effort. There was no objection from the Board regarding that expense.

- Rentals— Barb E. reported that there are no more rentals scheduled for September. October 7 and 17 events are scheduled, and another in December will (so far) complete the year’s rentals.

- Maintenance — Dave White was not in attendance, but the following topics were discussed:

- Regarding the fate of the Ginko trees east of the house, an assessment was received from John Sayers who recommended taking out the southernmost Ginko and re-trimming the larger one at the east of the house. He also said there was a branch on a Maple out front that should be trimmed. He will be putting together a quote for that work which will be forwarded to Dave W.

Ionia County Historical Society  
Presents

# Spirits of History Past

## Highland Park Cemetery Grave Site Tour

East Main Street, Ionia, MI

**SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 1ST**  
1:00 p.m.- 3:30 p.m.

*You will be intrigued  
by Ionia's rich history and  
all the spirits you will  
meet along the way...*

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 3:00 p.m.

**Admission:  
\$5.00**

Gift shop and small concessions available on tour.  
Pre-sale tickets available at John C. Blanchard Mansion,  
Thursdays 1-4p.m. or Summer Sundays 1-4p.m.  
ALL AGES WELCOME



*“I want to tell you the way it really was.”*  
- Spirit of past  
Search [www.ioniahistory.org](http://www.ioniahistory.org) for more information \* Like us on Facebook



- October 31 — Halowe’en: The McCords and Shawna H. will host trick-or-treaters again at the Blanchard House again this year. Donations of candy are needed to satisfy the hundreds of costumed marauders.

- November 1 — The monthly membership meeting will feature a program called “The Last Man in Merrinsville” performed by Raymond Goodwin. This is another event co-sponsored by the Ionia Community Library and the ICHS at the Blanchard House, 7:00 p.m. (NOTE: The reference in last month’s Chronicle to a workshop to make Victorian Christmas decorations was a mistake on my part. Sorry for any inconvenience or confusion. — D.M.)

- November 4 — At 6:30 p.m., the Friends of the Library are hosting a Murder Mystery Fundraiser at the Blanchard House. The event features the entertainment of The Master Arts Theatre of Grand Rapids. Event proceeds to be split between the Friends of the Library and the Ionia Historical Society. Tickets (available soon at \$40 single, a pair for \$75 or reserve a table of four for \$140) will include a light dinner and soft drinks; a donation bar will be available.

- November 14 — Tri-River Museums Network will be meeting at the Blanchard House for lunch. All interested parties are invited to meet representatives from 28 area museums.

- November 26 — ICHS Holiday Sale at the Blanchard House. This event needs to be discussed, and a chairperson established to run it. More to come.

- December 2 — Mrs. Claus Bazaar at the Middle School: The ICHS will have two tables again. The detailed arrangements are still to be made. Volunteers are welcomed to help set-up, take-down, and staff the booth during the event. Contact Ally Cook if you can help.

- December 6 — Annual ICHS Holiday Pot-Luck at the Blanchard House

- December 10 & 17 — The Blanchard House will be open for

## Thanks to our ICHS “Business Buddies”

**Dan Balice**

**Darin Elliott**

**Larry Heffelfinger**

**Lyle Joslyn**

**Glen Rairigh**

**Todd Reurink**

**Rich and Lindsay Thompson**

- Water damage in the ceilings of the house need to be repaired soon (specifically in the dressing room) now that the roof has been patched.

- It was noted that the globes on the lights in the front yard need to be removed and cleaned out.

- David M. still hopes to find time to repair the latch on the door from the kitchen to the back porch.

- Uncompleted projects include: the new storm door for the back of the house, the proposed electrical work in the basement, painting the back stairs, refinishing pantry shutters, and more.

- Linda C. said she would call Dave W. with the details of this meeting's conversation.

• Museum— Linda C. reports that she's thinking about holiday displays in the museum, and looking forward to display ideas for "Ionia's Birthday" next spring. There is a display in the dining room that she put together for the Ladies' Literary Club meeting last week.

\* \* \*

# THE WAYBACK MACHINE

## September, 1817

On the ninth of September, Alexander Twilight, probably first African American to graduate from a US college, received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Middlebury College, Vermont.

Monroe County was established in July, 1817, as one of the first steps in the organization of Michigan Territory after the War of 1812. The old settlement of Frenchtown within the county square took the name of Monroe and became the county seat, September, 1817. (At the time Monroe County included the lands now known as Lenawee and Washtenaw Counties.)



Paraphrased from Howe's "Historical Collections of Ohio" —

The adventure of Salmon Sweatland, of Conneaut, Ohio, who crossed Lake Erie in an open canoe, in September, 1817, is one of unusual interest. He had been accustomed, with the aid of a neighbor, Mr. Cousins, and a few hounds, to drive deer into the lake, where, pursuing them in a canoe, he shot them with but little difficulty. It seems one morning in a fit of deer-chasing enthusiasm, Mr. Sweatland launched his canoe without due preparations or forethought. After pursuing his prey for some time, he found himself far from shore in heavy seas and under darkening skies. His partner, Mr. Cousins, arrived sometime later to see the canoe missing and, after a long wait, ascertained the situation. The storm was upon them in full force by this time, and though several of his neighbors set out to rescue the hunter, they were compelled to abandon the search after being beaten by the oncoming gale. Sweatland was given up for lost.

Sweatland, however, continued to stay afloat with the faint hope that the wind might abate, or that aid might reach him from the shore. One or two schooners were in sight in the

course of the day, and he made every signal in his power to attract their attention, but without success. Given the direction of the unrelenting winds, one only expedient remained: that of putting before the wind and endeavoring to reach the Canadian shore, a distance of about fifty miles. This he resolved to embrace as his forlorn hope.

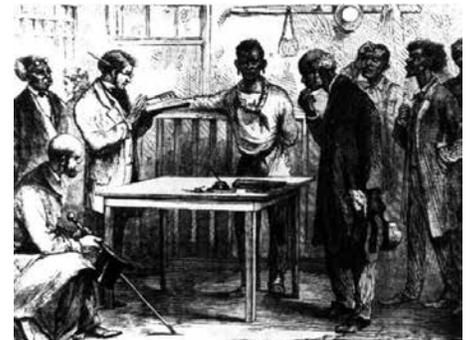
He paddled as best he could through the huge waves, bailing water from the canoe with his shoes, trying desperately to keep his bearings in the storm. For hours he fought to survive the lake's fury, and after an interminable battle with nature he discovered that the storm was finally fading. But just as he saw the clouds thinning, he saw that the sky was growing darker still. Night was falling.

In this fearful condition, destitute of food and the necessary clothing, his log canoe was rocked upon the billows during that long and terrible night. When morning appeared he was in sight of land, and found that he had made Long Point, on the Canada shore. He found himself faint with hunger and exhausted with fatigue, at the distance of forty miles from any human habitation, whilst the country that intervened was all marshes and tangled thickets. He recognized his whereabouts well enough to navigate, and dragged himself step-upon-step towards the settlement. On his way he found a quantity of goods, supposed to have been driven on shore from the wreck of some vessel, which gave him some meagre relief.

He ultimately arrived at the settlement and was received and treated with great kindness and hospitality by the people. After his strength was sufficiently recruited, he returned after several more days to his own neighborhood. On landing he found his funeral sermon had been preached, and had the rare privilege of seeing his own widow clothed in the habiliments of mourning.

## Sept 1867:

In the aftermath of the Civil War, there were many events during this season involving the acts of Reconstruction, including enforcement of martial law in the South and beginnings of the new State



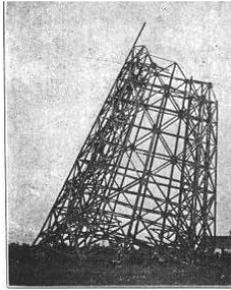
governments seeking due readmission to the Union. On September 13th, General E.R.S. Canby, military governor of South Carolina, ordered that State's courts to empanel blacks as jurors. On Sept 25th, Howard University was established in Washington D.C. under the direction of General O.O. Howard - the first all-black university in the U.S.

Also during Sept of this year, the Ottawa Rough Riders and Senators played the first organized football game in Canada, and John Muir set out on his life-changing journeys westward, which also proved to be a nation-changing event.

## Sept 1917:

On the third of September, German aircraft executed the first night bombing of London during the First World War.

In the wake of this shocking invasion, the U.S. government redoubled efforts to curtail the threat of German spies in America. Suspecting that Nikola Tesla's huge wireless tower on Long Island might be used for espionage, the Federal Government ordered the tower destroyed. The tower was 185 feet high, with a well below it 100 feet deep, and the equipment cost nearly \$200,000, financed primarily by J.P. Morgan. This event set Tesla's experiments in radio and energy transmission back to a point at which they never recovered their momentum or funding.



## Sept 1967:

At 5:00 in the morning local time, all road traffic in Sweden switched from driving on the left hand side of the road to driving on the right hand side. Preparation for Dagen Högertrafikomläggninge ("day of right-sided traffic conversion") had been made for the past four years. Beginning at 1:00 in the morning, all non-essential traffic had been barred from the roads. At 4:50, all remaining vehicles were brought to a stop at checkpoints. Ten minutes later, police directed vehicles to move to the other side of the road.

The new fall season of TV shows began, including some landmark television (both good and bad).

The Flying Nun premiered on ABC and would run for three seasons. Batman began a third season on ABC despite declining ratings, and added actress Yvonne Craig as Batgirl in an attempt to inject new life into the series. The pilot episode of Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In, which would become the number one rated television show in the nation in 1968, was shown as a "sneak preview" on NBC, which also launched Ironside, starring Raymond Burr as a wheelchair-bound police detective. The CBS television network censored The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour, and The Carol Burnett Show premiered on the same network.

The Saturday morning cartoon lineups featured superheroes. ABC featured Marvel Comics heroes, with The Fantastic Four and Spider-Man, while CBS relied on DC Comics for The Superman/Aquaman Hour of Adventure. NBC offered Super President, in which President of the United States James Norcross secretly worked as a super hero in his spare time. Other shows introduced were the comedy show George of the Jungle (which included Super Chicken and Tom Slick) on ABC, The Herculoids on CBS, and Birdman and the Galaxy Trio on NBC.

Also on television, Jim Morrison of The Doors defied CBS in a live telecast of The Ed Sullivan Show, after initially agreeing to alter the lyrics to their #1 hit, Light My Fire. Morrison had been asked to change the lyric "Girl, we couldn't get much higher" to "Girl, we couldn't get much better." out of the production staff's fear concern about the word "high" being associated with drug abuse.



## Our calendar of upcoming events.

- Sunday, October 1 — The annual "Spirits of Ionia" Cemetery Tour. Volunteers are needed for tickets, parking, driving, research, and actors. Please contact Kathleen Cook if you're interested!
- Wednesday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. — Our Annual Meeting and election of three Board Members for a two-year term. Be sure your dues are paid so you can vote! ALSO this night, a program sponsored by the Ionia Community Library entitled "Beekeeping 101."
- Wednesday, October 18, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House
- Tuesday, Oct 31, 6:00 p.m. — Halloween at the Blanchard House. DONATIONS OF CANDY ARE WELCOMED. (Large bags of pre-wrapped goodies only, please, by order of the City.)
- Wednesday, November 1, 7:00 p.m. — "The Last Man in Merrinsville" will be presented by Raymond Goodwin, a program co-sponsored with the Ionia Community Library at the Blanchard House.
- Saturday, November 4 — The Friends of the Library are hosting a MURDER MYSTERY at the Blanchard House with the Master Arts Theater of Grand Rapids. See details on Page Two of this issue.
- Sunday, November 26 — ICHS Member's Holiday Sale. (Watch this space for details!)

***Be sure to monitor our Facebook Page and Website for current information!***

# SOUVENIRS

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

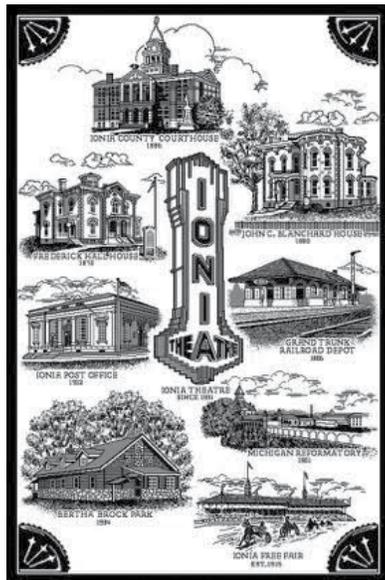
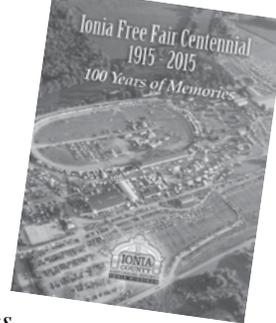
The newest addition to our collection of Ionia County memorabilia, the masterwork for 2016:

## 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**

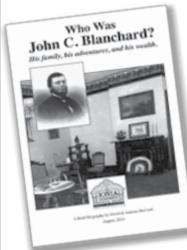
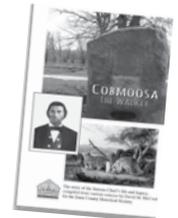
**1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"**

**1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary**

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

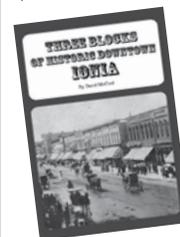
DVDs are available for \$10 each!

**Cobmoosa: The Great Walker** — A biography of the last Great Chief of the Grand River Indians. by David McCord. \$6 each



**Who Was John C. Blanchard?** A biography of one of Ionia's leading businessmen. by David McCord. \$6 each

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

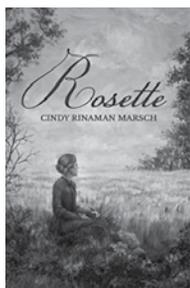


**Walking Tour of Historic Downtown Ionia** - 40-pages of history by David McCord. \$5 each

### 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

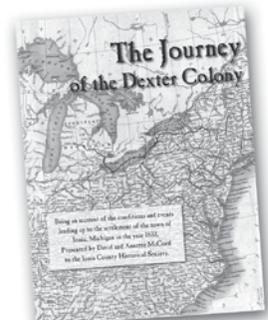


### Rosette: A Novel of Pioneer Michigan

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.

**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)





# 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 = \$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>