



## ARCHAEOLOGY IN IONIA COUNTY

David Cusack shared his adventures in archeology with members and guests at the Blanchard House on June 6th. He related the beginnings of his interests in the field, beginning with his return to the family farm near Muir several years ago. His interest soon became a passion, and he's devoted many hours to the pursuit of historical evidence. He was recently voted President of the Michigan Archaeological Society.

His first real-life encounter with local archaeology occurred by chance while driving by excavations for a new bridge across the Maple River at Muir. He had read about the Indian farms that had been on the land thereabouts, and stopped by on a weekend to poke around where the excavators had exposed some ancient levels of soil.

He found there something significant, and was inspired to research it further. One thing led to another and (through various tribulations) he discovered the site of a fire that may be 400 or more years old. He found abundant pottery fragments, charcoal, and more signs that suggest this to have been a site where the pottery was made. His discoveries were confirmed and officially recognized as "Site #20318" by federal and state authorities.

The testing of artifacts and final report of the site's description and authentication will be years in the making. This, David said, is not unusual in the archaeological world.

He continued to describe other digs in Ionia and around the state. He noted that Ionia has possibly the oldest site in Michigan (somewhere near Belding) with artifacts that date back around 14,000 years. But he also points out that many sites are much more recent, even less than 100 years. This includes the next site on his agenda: the Indian Industrial Boarding School near Mt. Pleasant which was closed in 1934.

He and his wife, Stacy Tchorzynski (an ICHS Director) travel throughout Michigan and the Great Lakes region visiting such sites, delivering lectures and consulting with fellow archaeologists.

Many thanks to David for the presentation, and for his work in discovering and preserving Michigan's fascinating history.

*In the photos to the right, the top shows excavation of "fire-baked soil" (doesn't show well in black-and-white), center are some examples of pottery found at the site (now on display at the Historical Museum in Lansing) and bottom is the excavated fire bowl (maybe kiln).*



### ICHS News and Information:

#### Minutes of the Board Meeting of May 30, 2018:

The Board Meeting was called to order by president Linda Ciangi shortly after 7:00 p.m. at the Blanchard House. Also present were Directors Dave White and Tracy Tchorzynski, plus Treasurer Kathleen Cook, Secretary David McCord, and rental committee chair Barb Ehlert.

The first order of business was sharing the notification of our re-instatement for non-profit status with the IRS. Thanks were shared for all who made this happen. The Treasurer has the complete record of the process on file. Stacy T. asked about the grant we received from the Ionia Co. Foundation, and was assured that they would issue the check as promised now that this IRS situation has been resolved.

- President's Report — Linda C. noted that she has been review-

ing the Bylaws and Policies of the ICHS, and has asked Sally Johnson, president of the Tri-River Museum Network, about acquiring copies of the Bylaws of other museums like ours. Her review revealed one item that she pointed out specifically: Directors are required to notify the President if they will not be able to attend a meeting. Aside from being a courtesy, it's actually in the Bylaws. She also emphasized the need for the Secretary to produce formal minutes for the Board Meetings in a timely manner, and distribute those minutes to the Directors and Officers well before the next Board meeting.

- Treasurer's Report — Kathleen C. shared the details of recent financial activity. (Copies available on request.) She also reported that our investments have done well. We have a couple of CDs that need to be renewed or reinvested. She will arrange a meeting with the investment firm within the next few weeks to determine our best course of action.

*Continues...*

*"News" continued from page 1:*

Dave W. asked to be included in that meeting if possible.

- Rental Committee — Barb E. reported that we have no rentals booked at this time. The recent rental of the house (May 23) by the local Republican Party was a success.

- Accessions — No report. However, concern was expressed about Father Mason's doll house on display on the second floor succumbing to the heat was discussed. The adhesive he used to secure items to the walls is failing in the heat. Father Mason will be contacted to discuss the options, one of which is to store it off site during the hotter months. More to come.

- Building & Grounds — Dave W. and Linda C. noted the installation of new electrical outlets in the basement, plastering and painting on the second floor. Other items on the "to do" list were reviewed. Dave W. will get some estimates together for additional tasks and put together a plan and budget for the more significant items.

Under "Old Business" there were reports of our recent events.

- Spring Into the Past was a success again, with a steady flow of visitors to the house.

- Upstairs/Downtown Tours were also, though attendance was down. (Kathleen wondered if the idea has run its course, or if there's something we might do to enhance the experience in the future. The Board agreed that we should continue to do something annually in the business district in any case.)

- The Cruisin' Classics car show is coming June 2; Kathleen, Ally, and others will staff a souvenir table for the ICHS.

- The Oz Festival is June 8 & 9 at the Fairgrounds. Several ICHS members are very involved in this event, though not in an official capacity.

- The Free Fair Parade float for the ICHS is being headed by Ally Cook. Stacy, David Cusack, and Ally are the core of that committee and will discuss their plans soon.



- Carol Gallagher has consented to organize the Queen's Reception again at the Blanchard House before the parade.

- Summer Sundays are underway, and volunteers are needed to staff the house - greeters and tour guides. Three to four members are needed to make this experience a good one for our visitors.

- Kathleen noted that she'll be busy at the weekend of October 1st, the date set for the Cemetery Tour. She asked the Board if we could change the date of the tour, but no new date was set at this meeting.

- David McCord reported that the Boy Scouts "History Hike" would be the morning of June 23rd, and (thanks to the Board's earlier decision) start at the Blanchard House. Kathleen C. suggested that we provide refreshments for the hikers, which was generally supported.

*Cast members from the June 8-9 "Michigan Oz Festival" held at the Ionia Fairgrounds, featuring several ICHS members.. Photo by Pat Lewis.*



In other old business, Linda C. shared an updated inventory of the items being stored at the Sentinel-Standard facility. She reports that small signs are being made to label the different shelf units with the category of their contents. She asked the Board for permission to solicit help from a friend, Stan Preston, for moving stuff around in the facility. The Board approved. They will be making room for the committee to work on the IFF parade float there as well. Linda is also checking on removing a cement post that's outside the door of the facility that will be very hard to steer around and "is just in the way."

Linda reported that our DVD inventory is getting low again, and the last of the DVD cases have been used. David M. will order a new box of cases, which will run about \$25.00. Linda moved and Stacy supported the motion for the order, which passed.

Under new business, Linda C. was inspired by a story of the early Christmases in Ionia related by Erastus Yeomans. In this story, he noted that red yarn was acquired to knit new mittens for the children and hung on the Christmas tree. She'd like to put out the call for red yarn, and/or red knit mittens, and decorate a tree with these mittens for this coming holiday. The mittens will then be given away to kids, including a small card attached that relates the historical story.

David M. reported that Facebook has become a more effective way to publicize ICHS activities. In place of a dedicated Publicity committee, he asked if he could have a \$50/month budget to help promote paid advertising on line for our events. A campaign is ready to go to promote Summer Sundays, and another in the works to promote rentals. Dave W. moved to provide the monthly request, which was support by Stacy T. and passed.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 8:30 p.m. and those in attendance inspected the new electrical work in the basement as well as other maintenance issues in the house.

— D. McCord, Secretary, June 6, 2018

## **From the General Meeting of June 6, 2018:**

On Wednesday, June 6, President Ciangi opened the meeting with a welcome to our members and guests. There were quite a few new faces and old friends in attendance.

For those who missed the news, Linda reported that our non-profit status was officially reinstated on May 11 after the completion of the necessary paperwork.

Electrical outlets have been added in the basement, the front porch light repaired, and plaster and paint done in the second floor ceilings. Many thanks to the professionals who performed the work and donated their labor to the Historical Society. Thanks to Chris Bredice, Greg Cook, Warren Wentworth, and Dave White.

Thanks to Jane and Mark Horrocks for their work on the landscaping, keeping our flower gardens looking nice for the summer. Thanks also to our clean-up crews, including Katelyn Mooney and Barb Ehlert, making progress in organizing storage areas and making things a bit more manageable. (An on-going challenge!)

The usual Thursday afternoon work sessions now include review

## **Thanks to our ICHS "Business Buddies"**

**Dan Balice  
Darin Elliott  
Larry Heffelfinger  
Lyle Joslyn  
Glen Rairigh  
Todd Reurink  
Rich and Lindsay Thompson**

"News" continued from page 2:

of business issues, incoming mail and so on by Linda and Treasurer Kathleen Cook. Accession work times are now moved to Thursday evenings - contact Shawna Hoekstra if you'd like to help (contact info is below the "Calendar" on this page).

Income was reported from recent events as follows: Spring Into The Past rendered \$82 in donations, The Upstairs/Downtown Tours brought in \$697, and \$220 was earned from souvenir sales at the Cruisin' Classics Car Show on June 2.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED to host at the Blanchard House for our Summer Sundays from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. If you can be there, please notify a Board Member to get on the schedule. Just an hour will help!

The general meeting was adjourned, and refreshments were shared (thanks to Dave and Laurie White). The attendees then reassembled for David Cusack's program (see story on page 1).

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## Our calendar of upcoming events.

Wednesday, June 27, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Board Meeting at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, July 4, 6:00 p.m. — The annual Independence Day pot-luck dinner at the Blanchard House - Public welcomed!

Ionia Free Fair activities this year include our displays at the Antique Village (in the Floral Building) and our float in the Parade and Queen's Reception (both on the 16th). If you would like to help, please contact a Board member!

Wednesday, July 25, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Board Meeting at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, August 1st: Al Bryant presents "Lizzie Borden" at the Blanchard House

Wednesday, August 29, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Board Meeting at the Blanchard House

Thursday evenings are work sessions for the Accessions Committee, documenting the artifacts in the Historical Society's historical collections. If you would like to help with this effort, please contact Shawna Hoekstra, 616-430-1348.

Thursday afternoons are work sessions for housekeeping and displays. If you would like to help with this effort, please contact Linda Ciangi at 616-527-4945

NOTE: The work schedules are subject to change.



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



# THE WAYBACK MACHINE

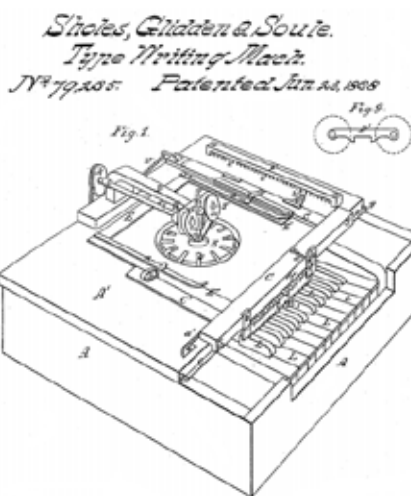
1818 -

The first settlers arrived in what is now the City of Pontiac in June of 1818. Two years later there were enough people there to form a village named after the famous Indian Chief who had made his headquarters in the area only a few years before. Pontiac was Michigan's first inland settlement.

In 1818, Augustus Brevort Woodward was serving as a judge of Michigan Territory. Woodward put himself in charge of laying out a new city plan for Detroit after a great fire had devastated the center of the village. His plan divided the land into triangles, not rectangles, giving the city a repeating, honeycomb-shaped pattern with broad main thoroughfares and secondary roads lined with trees. But while Woodward was away in Washington, D.C., a trio of Detroit leaders decided to sell land according to "the usual plan" beginning June 1, 1818. And, in the absence of an approved plan to guide Detroit's growth in an orderly pattern, the city grew into a haphazard street grid that still frustrates people trying to drive crosstown.



On June 23, 1818, U.S. Speaker of the House Henry Clay received 13 bids on a project to completely refurbish the House Chamber, following the Capitol's near destruction by invading British forces four years earlier. Speaker Clay sought carpets, wall hangings, lamps, 187 chairs, and 51 tables. In ordering group tables, in preference to individual desks, Clay continued the House practice of seating members together, presumably to symbolize their equality and interdependence. Aiming for utility and durability, rather than elegance and style, the frugal Clay selected the lowest bid. It came from a 27-year-old New York City cabinetmaker named Thomas Constantin.



1868 -

American newspaper editor Christopher Latham Sholes was granted a patent on this day for a typewriter. There are claims by others to have invented the machine, but Sholes is widely believed to have produced the first commercially successful model. Nobody knows what the apparatus looked like or how it worked and there have been

patents registered by others for machines that could pass as a typewriter.

The problem with his first machine was that the keyboard was arranged alphabetically, just as anyone would expect. But as operators learned to type at speed it was discovered that the metal arms bearing each character often became entangled. Sholes studied the problem with his partner Amos Densmore and worked out which letters were most often used. They then put them as far apart as possible on a new keyboard, reducing the chance of clashing arms because they would come from opposite directions. And thus the "Qwerty" keyboard, still in use today, was born.

*Wayback Machine - Continued...*

On June 13, 1868, Oscar Dunn was inaugurated as the first elected black lieutenant governor of a U.S. state. He was also the President pro tempore of the Louisiana State Senate. He was a member of the Printing Committee of the legislature, which controlled a million-dollar budget. He also served as President of the Metropolitan Police with an annual budget of nearly one million dollars.

Also during the month of June, seven former Confederate States were re-admitted into the Union. They were Arkansas, Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina.

## 1918 -

The Hammond Circus Train Wreck is considered one of the worst railroad accident in the history of America with 56 deaths and 127 injuries. The train was part of the Michigan Central Railroad and left Kalamazoo on June 22, 1918 crashing just before Chicago between Gary and Hammond in Northwest Indiana.



Alonzo Sergent was the engineer that day and reported after the crash\*:

"I was called shortly after 8 p.m. June 21, for deadhead equipment west, engine 8485, for 10.15 p.m., and left Kalamazoo, Michigan at 10.35 p.m. Had been up since 5 a.m., June 21, dead heading from my home in Jackson on Train No. 41, and had had little or no sleep during the day. Had had a couple of heavy meals before going out, realizing that I would not get anything more to eat until some time the next morning. Leaving Kalamazoo, followed freight train to Michigan City yard and stopped at signal near Center Street. Got proceed signal from some one on ground, pulled up to Michigan City, stopped at standpipe and took water....

"Wreck happened at about 4.05 a.m., June 22, and I stayed there for an hour or more assisting in getting people out of the wreckage. I have been in the service of the Michigan Central Railroad Co. for approximately 28 or 29 years, the last 16 of which I have been continuously employed as an engineer. I am in perfect physical condition, as well as mental condition, and have had no illness within 25 or 30 years requiring the service of a doctor. There was nothing defective about the air brakes or other mechanism of the engine or train that I was operating, nor was there any defective condition of any of the signals or track upon which I was operating to the best of my knowledge. The accident was due solely to the fact that I accidentally fell asleep, and I had no intent to injure any person, nor was same done with malice, but solely through an accident, as aforesaid."

*\*Quote taken from <http://k1025.com>*

A memorial to those who died in the Circus Train Wreck and for many the place of their burial is Showman's Rest, inside a cemetery near Chicago.

In 1918, the state of Michigan, following the lead of Wisconsin, began to design and mark its own system of interconnected and numbered "state" highways. This first attempt at simplification and systematization proved to be of great value to the motorist. M-16 was one of the first (Grand River Avenue) to be assigned a number, as well as M-12 across the U.P. and M-31 (Saginaw to Port Huron), M-41 from Fremont to Hart. These highways have changed a lot since the original 1918 definitions, but remnants are still around, and some of us still call Grand River Avenue "Old

16". Road signs wouldn't actually be in place for several years, and in 1926 the road and highway designations were standardized by the federal government to make state-to-state travel (especially commercial travel) more efficient.

## 1968 -

Helen Keller, 87, American author, political activist, and lecturer, and the first deaf-blind person to earn a bachelor of arts qualification, died at her estate near Easton, Connecticut.



June 5, 1968: U.S. presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy fatally wounded by assassin following primary victory speech



A federal law, that had prohibited the printing of color images of United States postage stamps, was repealed as President Johnson signed legislation. "Since stamp counterfeiting is today virtually nonexistent," a White House statement said, "this restriction is no longer necessary. There is no reason now why the full meaning and beauty of our postage stamps cannot be communicated to all the world in color reproduction." Previously, stamp catalogs and encyclopedias could only display black-and-white images. The law had become obsolete after U.S. stamps were "impregnated with an invisible phosphor which causes canceling machines to reject counterfeits".

"The Robison family murders" made headlines in this month. These were the murders of Richard Robison, his wife Shirley Robison, and their four children: Ritchie, Gary, Randy, and Susan on June 25, 1968. The upper-middle-class family from the metropolitan Detroit were shot and killed while vacationing in their Lake Michigan cottage just north of Good Hart, near the Straits of Mackinac. The case remained unsolved after a 15-month investigation by the Michigan State Police and the Emmet County Sheriff's Office.



However, when the investigation was completed in December 1969, evidence pointed to one person: Joseph Raymond Scolaro III, an embezzling employee of Richard Robison. During the course of the investigation, Scolaro failed two lie detector tests; a third test was judged inconclusive as to the truth.

Four years later, a newly elected chief prosecutor in Oakland County, L. Brooks Patterson, believed the Robison crime had originated within his jurisdiction and reopened the prosecution. When the prime suspect Scolaro learned of the impending charges and arrest, he committed suicide on March 8, 1973. Scolaro left behind a typewritten note on which he wrote "I am a liar [sic]—a cheat—a phony" with a list of people he had swindled in multiple business schemes. He then added a handwritten note to his mother on the same sheet of paper saying "I had nothing to do with the Robisons—I'm a liar but not a murderer—I'm sick and scared—God and everyone please forgive me."\*

Since Michigan law does not permit an open murder case to be officially closed, the suicide of the prime suspect Scolaro placed the case in the "inactive" file. Thus, many questions remained unanswered. Over many years other crime theories have surfaced but to date none has ever been substantiated.

*\* Quoted from Wikipedia*



# SOUVENIRS

MEMORIES & MOMENTOS IONIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HERITAGE & HISTORY

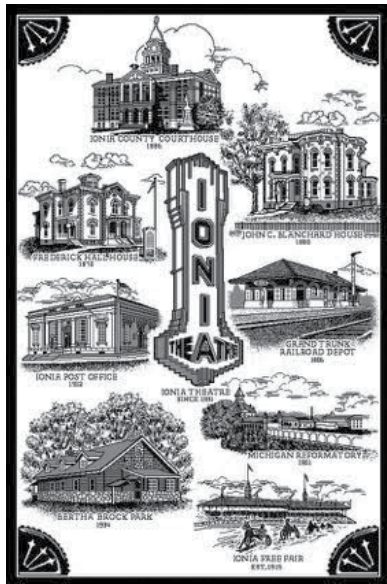
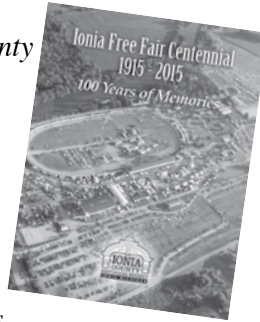
The newest addition to our collection of Ionia County memorabilia, the masterwork for 2016:

## Ionian 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!



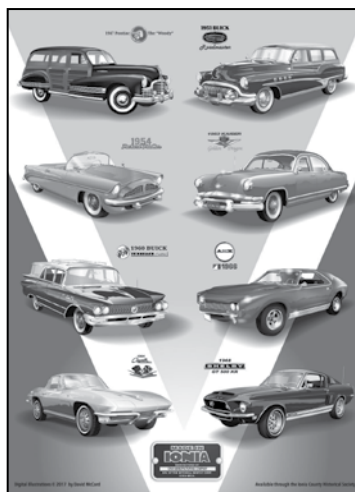
## ALSO AVAILABLE:

Reproductions of historic Ionia publications:

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

AND MORE!

## IONIA-MADE AUTOMOBILES



A new addition to the ICHS Gift Shoppe, the 18x24-inch poster on heavy gloss paper sells for \$15, and the packet of NINE "Made in Ionia" automobile postcards are just \$10. (Artwork by David McCord; proceeds go to the ICHS.)

## 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

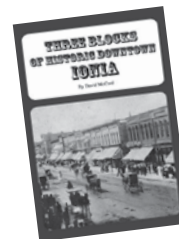
**DVDs are available for \$10 each!**

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

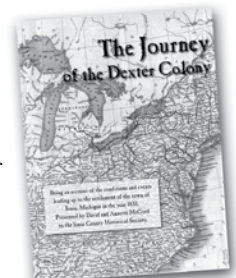
A History of Bertha Brock Park on its 80th "Birthday" by David McCord. \$6 each



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

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 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](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 2018 Board of Directors & Officers

Linda Ciangi, President — 616-527-4945  
Ally Cook, Vice President — 616-821-1406  
Dave White, Director — 989-855-2350  
Goose Elliott, Director — 616 755 2486  
Stacy Tchorzynski, Director — 517-763-1770  
David McCord, Secretary — 616-527-3784  
Kathleen Cook, Treasurer — 616-527-2626  
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>