



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



The HOUSE of DAVID



We welcomed back our friend Al Bryant (a former resident of Belding) to give a presentation on August 7th. He has entertained us with programs about Bonny and Clyde, The Marx Brothers, Cemetery Symbolism, Fraternal Organizations, and the Lizzy Borden case.

This year he shared the story of The House of David, a religious sect which was established in the late 1800s by a charismatic leader named Benjamin Purnell. Al shared a bit of the background of Purnell's teachings and the history behind his claims as the "Seventh Profit" of a new chapter in God's great plan. (This included some rather bizarre episodes.)

In 1903, Purnell (called "King Ben" by the press) established his religious colony in Benton Harbor, Michigan, and called it "The House of David". It was financed in great part by the Bauschke Brothers of Kalamazoo who owned the second largest wagon works in the country at the time.

Soon, supporters of Purnell's spiritual teachings began to send in their donations, and often move to Benton Harbor to join the colony. Many came from England and

Australia, where the movement had a huge following.

Aside from the unorthodox philosophy of the organization, the lifestyle practiced by the devotees was very virtuous and respectable. Visitors to their community were consistently impressed with the pervasive happiness and familial atmosphere of the residents.

The followers also proved to be very talented and skillful in every endeavor,



which included musicianship, carpentry, textiles, furniture-making, and hospitality. Probably the most popular of their activities were their traveling bands of musician and their sports teams - particularly the baseball team. They toured the country for decades in the early 20th century.

At the Benton Harbor colony, they also built a beautiful campus, including a resort for visitors, and eventually a large amusement park and zoo, including a scaled down steam train that was a great attraction on its own.

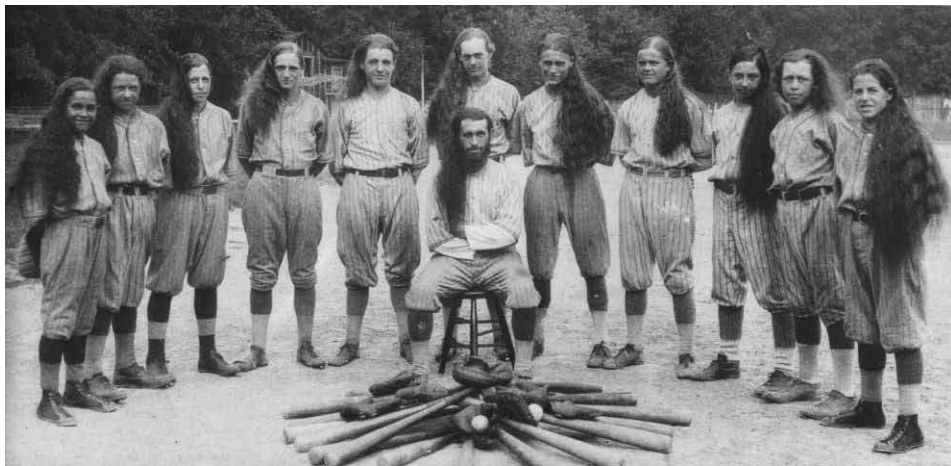
Through all their successes, though, came scrutiny from the outside world. Eventually, King Ben Purnell (portrait shown above) was caught up in scams and scandals, real and imagi-



Continues...

“The House of David” continued from page 1:
nary, which began to crumble the foundation of the House of David. When he died in 1927, the community he built began to fade. It still exists today, with only a very few followers still maintaining the last remaining property in Benton Harbor. They’re still open to public visits and keep a museum and gift shop there, a mere shadow of their former glory.

Thanks Al for another entertaining and enlightening presentation!



For our annual musical presentation on September 4th, the members of Three Husbands on the Loose decided to present a bit of “recent history.” 2019 being the 50th anniversary of the Woodstock Music Festival, we chose 15 songs that were performed at the festival and gave these our own Three Husbands spin. Again, we welcomed our special guest Colleen Farrell to represent the fairer sex and lend a hand at the harmonies.

As usual, we presented not only the songs but some stories behind them, and about the artists that performed them during that “three days of art and music” which was originally dubbed the “Aquarian Exposition.” We focused more on the songs themselves than the festival, and performed our own “husbandized” versions of a few.

We’re glad to share the music of our history and the history of our music! It was gratifying to see folks in the audience singing along and hear the reminiscence afterwards of those turbulent (but wonderful) times in our nation’s history and in our own lives.

We look forward to coming back next year for another musical trip to the past!

Many thanks from David, Doug, Bryan, and Colleen.

Minutes of the August 7 General Meeting

The meeting was called to order by President Ciangi at 7:00 p.m. at the Blanchard House.

She welcomed members and guests, reminding folks that their annual dues would be coming around soon. To vote for the election of three new directors to our Board in October requires a paid membership. She also noted that nominations for those three positions must be made by the September meeting. Linda Ciangi, Dave White, and Stacy Tchorzynski’s terms are up. Current candidates are Ron Thomas, Kathleen Cook, and Stacy T. up for re-election. David McCord nominated Bryan Kimble for the Board also.

Kathleen Cook emphasized once again that we need someone to come forward to accept the position of Treasurer for the ICHS. This is not a Board member position - any member who is qualified and willing (and approved by the Board) is eligible.

David McCord will prepare the materials for the upcoming annual meeting, including sending out membership forms (with ballots attached) as in years past.

Based on a recommendation by former Board member Goose Elliott, the Board is considering a change to the Bylaws to require that Board Members reside within the County. David M. will craft an amendment for the Board to review.

Thursday work sessions continue between 1:00 and 4:30 every week. These sessions include a wide variety of household chores, especially arrangements before and after rentals and meetings at the house, as well as occasional larger projects. Currently, reference books on the shelves in the east parlor (also known as the “law office”) are being resorted and stocked for folks who wish to do historical research at the House.

The annual Yard Sale is scheduled for Sept 6 & 7. Barb Ehlert and Linda Ciangi are chairing this year’s sale at the Blanchard House. Details for set-up and clean-up and volunteers will be coming soon. Interested parties place contact the co-chairs.

The Cemetery Tour is set for October 13th this year, and Kathleen Cook taking the chair once more. The Kimbles have

Continues...

Help Wanted!

If you can spare some time, some expertise, or some muscle-power, there are plenty of things you can do to help support our organization. Please sign up to help whenever you can. If you have suggestions or specific area of interest, please let the Board know also. The ICHS is for the entire community, and that includes you, too!



"Minutes" continued from page 2:

done some research into candidates for the tour subject, and we can always use a few more actors for the program. If you're interested in helping with this event, please contact the chairman.

The Board has asked David McCord to bring in some historic toys and games for the November 6th meeting, and the hope is that folks will come in and play some. We'll have card tables set up for euchre, bridge, whist, etc. There will be checkers, squails, mah-jongg and crokinole, too.

Consider helping out with our holiday decorations, too. We hope to have that complete before Thanksgiving if possible. Volunteers can contact the Board for details.

There is a newly donated set of Ypsilanti Reed white wicker furniture in the conservatory. It came to us from a family in Belding. Marilyn Nash has volunteered to set the stage in that space for photo sessions. We charge professionals \$50 per hour to use the Blanchard House for photo sessions.

Since the Board's decision to open for public tours only the first Sunday of each month, we'll be seeking volunteers to staff the Blanchard House. The ideal staff for these afternoons (1 to 4 p.m.) is a greeter at the door plus tour guides for the upstairs, main floor, and basement museum. If you'd like to help in any capacity, please contact a Board Member to sign up!

Memorial donations were received in honor of Joan McCord. It was suggested to use these donations to patch up wallpaper wrinkles and seams (where the wallpaper is held up with scotch tape) and perhaps update the decor in our restroom.

David M. brought in a stack of "save the date" fliers with a list of upcoming ICHS activities on them. He encourages everyone to take a copy or a stack to hand out. If more are needed, please contact him or make your own copies.

The meeting was adjourned, and the President turned over the gavel to David McCord to introduce our guest speaker for the evening (see story on page one).

- Your Obt. Svt. - David M.

ICHS Board Meeting of August 28, 2019

The meeting was called to order by President Ciangi at approx. 7:00 p.m. in the Blanchard House. Also present were Directors Barb Ehlert, Dave White, Stacy Tchorsynski and Katelyn Mooney, plus Bryan and Mary Kimble and Shawna Hoekstra of the Accessions Committee, Treasurer Kathleen Cook, and Secretary David McCord.

There was no formal Secretary's Report, but it will be published in the next Chronicle newsletter as usual. Kathleen gave a printed overview of the status of accounts, promising a more detailed report soon as she prepares to work on the Annual Report. As always, for more details, please contact these officers.

The Rental Committee (Barb Ehlert) reports that there's a rental coming on September 26th.

Dave White is still pursuing the project to replace the back steps and railings on the Blanchard House. He also has a contact to clean out the eaves troughs to prepare for the wet season. A nest of bees was discovered and that has been taken care of. We also have a woodchuck in the neighborhood, and hope to address that issue soon as well.

The Accessions Committee continues to make progress cataloging items in the collection. Again they emphasized paperwork, to be sure the records are as complete as possible, and welcome whatever help they can get to complete Accession Forms where there are none - especially for new acquisitions. It was also noted

Continues...

Our calendar of upcoming events.

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

Wednesday, October 2, 7:00 p.m. — Our **Annual Meeting** at the Blanchard House. All members and guests are welcomed! There will be an election of three new Board Members by those who have paid their annual membership.

Sunday, October 13, 10:00 a.m. — Our annual Cemetery Tour, "**Spirits of Ionia**" at the Highland Park Cemetery. Come out and hear stories about deceased citizens from long ago.

Wednesday, October 30, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Board Meeting at the Blanchard House.

Thursday, October 31, 6:00 p.m. — **Trick-or-Treat at the Blanchard House**, hosted by Dvid & Annette McCord. Come in costume and help us greet the 400+ kids who stop by the mansion for goodies. (Donations of pre-packaged candies is greatly appreciated.)

Wednesday, November 6, 7:00 p.m. — **Historic Game Night** at the Blanchard House, with a display of historic table games by David McCord. Be prepared to learn a Victorian Parlor Game, or play any game you like. *Bring the kids, too!*

Our usual Weekly Activities.

Between Memorial Day and Labor Day, the Blanchard House is open for tours on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. Volunteers are needed to staff the house on these afternoons, either as tour guides, greeters, or companions.

Wednesday evenings are work sessions for the Accessions Committee, documenting the artifacts in the Historical Society's historical collections. If you would like to help, please contact Mary Kimble, 616-897-6592.

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!



SPIRITS

of Ionia's Past

2019

On Sunday
October 13th
from 1:00 p.m.
until 4:00 p.m.



Highland Park
Cemetery
on East Main at
Prairie Creek



**Just \$5.00
Admission!**

THE ENTRANCE TO HIGHLAND PARK CEMETERY (OVER 100 YEARS AGO).

Join us on our annual adventure into the stories of Ionia's past through Ionians who have passed! Reinactors portray some of the prominent citizens interred at the cemetery with stories of their lives, including how they came to be buried here. See the beautiful headstones and monuments, too!

(Refreshments available for a small fee.)



that, when they arrived for their Wednesday work session recently, there were a few lights left on in the House. They urge everyone to take one more glance around the House when they lock up.

First Sunday Tours need volunteers, so everyone is urged to check their calendars and see if they can spare a few hours to welcome the public to our historic home.

Barb E. said she hoped to get tents set up on Wednesday before the Sept 6-7 Yard Sale so that all the items for sale can be set out on Thursday. David M. said the McCord family would be donating lots of stuff from Joni McCord's home decorations to the sale, as well as loaning a half-dozen tables and a large canopy for the event.

Regarding the Cemetery Tour — Chairman Kathleen C. said that there really is no theme this year, but that there are still plenty of "personalities" that can be shared with our guests at Highland Park Cemetery on October 13th. Thus far, our actors are Kathleen (Florence Kidd), Linda Ciangi (Janet Steele), McCords (TBD), Kimbles (TBD and health permitting), and Hunter Klutman (TBD). Kathleen asks everyone to help recruit at least another actor or two. Stacy T. will set up a refreshment stand, Barb H. and Barb E. will do the ticket booth, and Shawna H. will staff the tram. We still need a truck and driver for the tram as well. David M. will help with publicity, and we should be sure to get info to the media ASAP.

The President said we should be finding ways to reach out to the local history teachers to offer to give student groups tours of the house and museum, as well as visit their classrooms to present historical information to them.

The President shared a new listing of items added to the Sentinel-Standard storage facility over the past month. This includes a display case and shelves donated by Ionia Public Schools (with thanks to Mike Avery), photos found in the basement of the Hiler's building (thanks to Ann Dunn) and the original 1931 popcorn machine from the Ionia Theater (thanks to Dan Peiffer).

Regarding the Tri-River Historical Museums Network — David M. reports that, at the recent the Tri-River Museums meeting, Dale Hunt from the Grattan Museum said they have a Fanning Mill to donate to an interested museum. Since Ionia was home to (at least) two fanning mill factories, and we don't have one in our collection, David asked the Board to accept said donation. The Board approved, and it will be done. David also noted that the Tri-River bus tour in September sold out quickly, and that he would be representing our group at the Kuetsche Center for Local History at GVSU in October. Finally, the Tri-River Directory of Museums for 2020 will be going to press soon, and the ICHS has helped support this publication with a small ad every year. The cost is \$65, and David asked the Board to approved this expense. It was so moved by Stacy, supported by Linda, and passed. An invoice will be coming to the Treasurer accordingly.



We were invited to register as a vendor with the Warner Brothers Entertainment company as a resource for film projects. This connection was made by Erika Hamilton after she rented the House for a documentary project. David and Kathleen have been trying to do the online registration, but running into technical difficulties. They hope to report success soon!

Some VHS tapes were donated which have historic video footage to share. David M. will take these and have a look.

Regarding the Gift Shoppe — Linda C. reported that we only have a single hardcover copy of the Free Fair history book in inventory, and asked the Board for \$658.00 to restock with 25

new copies. We nearly double our money on these book sales. Barb E. support the motion and it passed. David M. will order the books and hopefully have them in stock before the holidays. Linda also noted that we're running low on DVDs, and asked the Board to approve \$25 to get 10 new copies made by Joel Kilgore (who has done it for us before). The motion was supported by Kathleen and passed. Linda also said that we only have a few of the black-and-gray "throws" in stock, and asked Kathleen to check the record to find out how much a new batch will cost.

Regarding Fund Raising efforts — Shawna again said that, if the members of the ICHS would like to participate in the Wreaths Across America program, she is eager to help. It raises funds (and awareness) for both organizations. All we need is someone to offer to chair the activity.

Linda C. also reminded everyone of downtown Ionia's "Thursday on the Bricks" events: the first Thursday of each month being sidewalk sales, guest vendors, entertainment, and contests in the downtown area. She also shared some of the other progress being made through the State's "Rising Tide" program in Ionia.

Planning ahead, there are a couple of opportunities for off-site visits for our January and February meetings (as usual), and the idea of hosting a Garden Tour was suggested for August of 2020.

The meeting was adjourned at approx. 8:45 p.m.

- Respectfully Submitted, David M.

Minutes of the Sept. 4th General Meeting

The General Meeting of the ICHS for September 4th was called to order by President Linda Ciangi at approximately 7:00 p.m. at the Blanchard House. She welcomed our members and guests, and presented a brief agenda.

She noted that the Secretary's Report would be coming soon in the next Chronicle from David M. and that the Treasurer's Report is available for the asking.

The Yard Sale is coming soon, and Linda invited everyone to stop by and help support the Historical Society if they can. Donations are still being accepted for the sale, and help with the set-up and clean-up will still be welcomed.

Linda said she would chair a Raffle for 2020, with the help and support of the membership. She hopes to have donations for prizes (gift cards are good) to help. Please contact her with your ideas, and please help to sell tickets!

Cook & Co. has opened their new ice cream parlor on Main Street and are doing a great business in a restored historic building. They have allowed the ICHS to set up a table with a few products for sale and a space for our publicity to be displayed as well. Thanks and congrats to them.

Linda also asked everyone to visit downtown Ionia and note the efforts being made in several storefronts to restore the old buildings and set up new businesses. She noted that many of these are a new generation of owners, and asked that we be sure to support their efforts.

Finally, she reminds everyone to get their dues paid and attend the Annual Meeting in October when we will be electing three Board members for the next two-year term. As usual, David M. will be handling the voting process, Kathleen the membership dues, and there will be a brief meeting of the new Board directly following the Annual Meeting to address the immediate business of electing officers and setting their meeting schedule for the coming year.

With nothing further from the floor, Linda then introduced our guests for the evening, Three Husbands on the Loose with special guest Colleen Farrell (see story).

WAYBACK

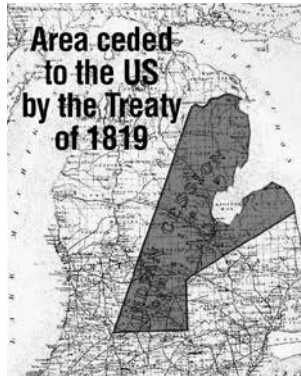
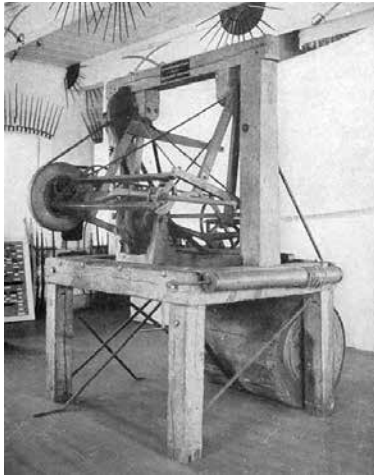


1819 - 200 Years Ago -

From "Leading American Inventors" (publishing in 1912):

Sep. 2, 1819 — Thomas Blanchard Patents Duplicating Lathe

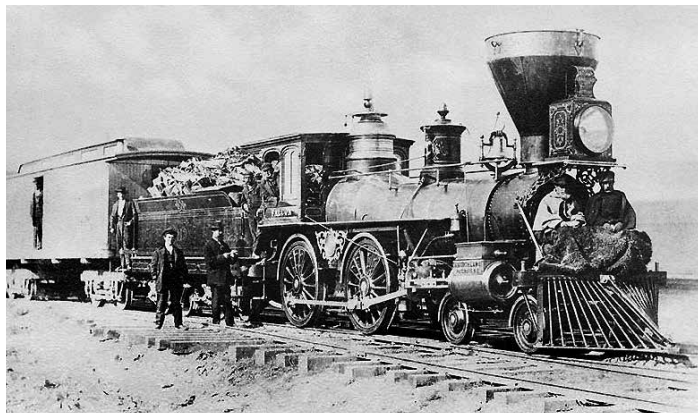
"On an axle slowly revolved are placed a stock to be copied and a wooden block in every way larger. Parallel to this axle is hinged a rectangular carriage, sliding gradually from one end of the lathe to the other. A spindle forming the outer boundary of this carriage may freely swing through a wide arc: it carries two wheels of like diameter, about three feet apart. One of them, pressed by a weight or a spring against the rotating stock to be copied, is small enough to touch its every point. The second wheel has at its rim a score of sharp cutters. As the first wheel feels its way along every contour of the original stock from end to end, its path is duplicated by the cutting wheel, which removes wood enough from its block to leave behind a copy of the model stock. When once the lathe is duly set and started, its work proceeds to a finish without a touch from its attendant."



September 24 was the date of the signing of the Treaty of 1819 between the United States of America and the Chippewa nation of Indians. General Cass, then Governor of the Northwest Territories, was commissioned to enter into the necessary negotiations. Among the 114 Chippewa (and other tribal chiefs) who affixed their signs to the treaty, Peshquescum, Okemus, and Kokoosh represented bands from the Ionia County area. Some records indicate that Chief Comboosa was in attendance, but did not sign the treaty.

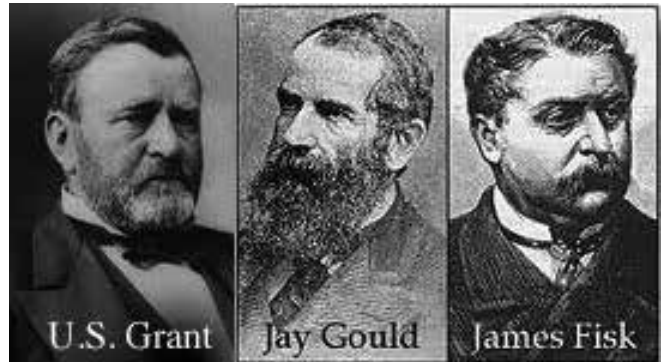
1869 - 150 Years Ago -

September 6th, 1869 — The First Westbound Train Arrives in San Francisco!



The First Transcontinental Railroad (known originally as the "Pacific Railroad" and later as the "Overland Route") was a 1,912-mile continuous railroad line constructed between 1863 and 1869 that connected the existing eastern U.S. rail network at Council Bluffs, Iowa with the Pacific coast at the Oakland Long Wharf on San Francisco Bay. The railroad opened for through traffic between Sacramento and Omaha on May 10, 1869, when CPRR President Leland Stanford ceremonially tapped the gold "Last Spike" (later often referred to as the "Golden Spike") with a silver hammer at Promontory Summit, Utah.

One of the most severe and destructive storms in history of lake navigation occurred in the month of September, 1869. Its especial violence was not felt at any particular place, but with a fearful widespread gust it swept the chain of lakes, leaving in its pathway of destruction a number of wrecked craft of all descriptions. The large steamer and propeller escaped its violence no less than the small scow and schooner engaged in shore-trading; all were piled in a wrecked mass along the beach or sunk in the engulfing waves. There was scarcely a lake port that did not feel the effects of the storm, and scarcely a ship-owner of importance who did not suffer some loss of property.



The Black Friday, September 24, 1869, gold panic was caused by the efforts of two investors, Jay Gould and his partner James Fisk, also called the Gold Ring, to corner the gold market on the New York Gold Exchange. The scandal took place during the Presidency of Ulysses S. Grant, whose policy was to sell Treasury gold at weekly intervals to pay off the national debt, stabilize the dollar, and boost the economy. The country had gone through tremendous upheaval during the Civil War and was not yet fully restored.

1919 - 100 Years Ago -

The "Gasoline Alley" daily comic strip premiered in the Chicago Tribune on August 23rd, 1919. As of this year, it is the longest-running comic strip in the United States.



President Woodrow Wilson set out on September 8 for a tour of the USA to rouse public opinion behind the Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations. On September 25, he suffered a physical breakdown in Colorado, and his health never recovered.

On September 12, the young Adolf Hitler joined an obscure political organization called the German Worker's Party as its seventh member. He did not support their platform on worker's rights, but was enthusiastic about its credo on German Nationalism and antisemitism.

The American Legion was incorporated by an act of US Congress on September 24th, and on the 27th, the Democratic National Committee voted to allow female members!

SOUVENIRS

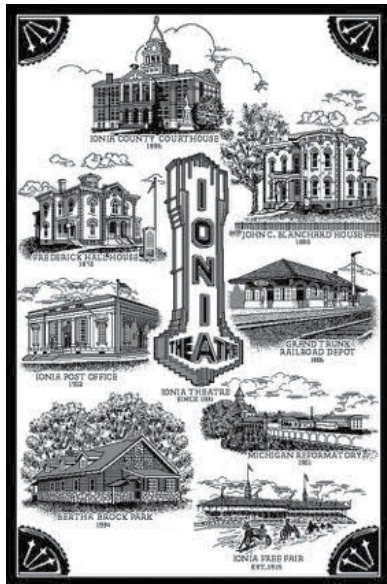
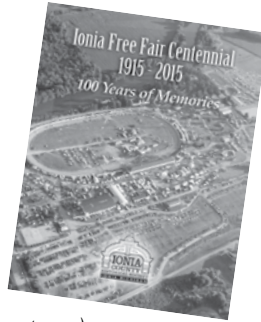
MEMORIES & MOMENTOS **IONIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY** **HERITAGE & HISTORY**

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

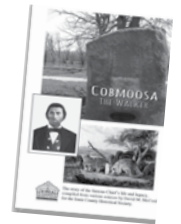
1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 “Winter Festival”

1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary

“Ionia’s First 150 Years” and “Ionia - A Look Back” - Films by Monroe MacPherson

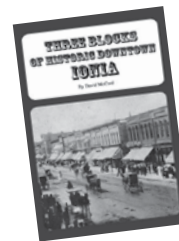
DVDs are available for \$10 each!

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

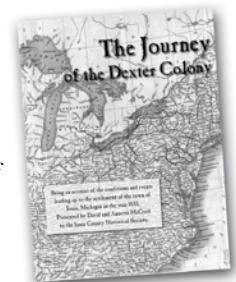
A History of Bertha Brock Park on its 80th “Birthday” by David McCord. \$6 each



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

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
- Antique Ionia Photographs

AND MORE!

IONIA-MADE AUTOMOBILES



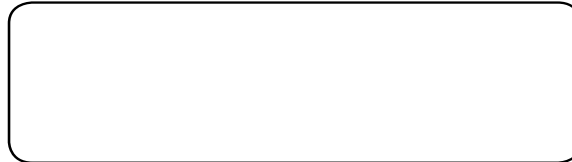
Exclusive to the ICHS Gift Shoppe, the 18x24-inch poster on heavy gloss paper sells for \$15, and the packet of NINE “Made in Ionia” automobile post-cards are just \$10. (Artwork by David McCord; proceeds go to the ICHS.)



the www.ioniahistory.org **CHRONICLE**

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

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



JOIN TODAY!

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St., Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please Check Your
Membership Type:

- Regular = \$20
- Sustaining = \$35
- Business Buddy = \$40
- Corporate = \$250
- Life = \$1000
- Free to Students under 18
- Gift = \$ _____

Please Share a
Little Information:

- Renewing Member
- New Member

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

Thanks!

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 2019 Board of Directors & Officers

- Linda Ciangi, President — 616-527-4945
- Barb Ehlert, Vice Pres/House Rentals — 616-522-0844
- Dave White, Director — 989-855-2350
- Katelyn Mooney, Director — 616-902-7777
- Stacy Tchorzynski, Director — 517-763-1770
- David McCord, Secretary — 616-527-3784
- Kathleen Cook, Treasurer — 616-527-2626

For information on your long-lost relatives in Ionia,
please contact the Ionia County Genealogy Society.
<http://ionia.migenweb.net/ICGS/icgshome.htm>