



# the **CHRONICLE**

The Almost Monthly Publication of  
the Ionia County Historical Society



## A Message from the ICHS President, Kathleen Cook

Dear ICHS Members and Friends,

During this unsettling time, I hope you and your families are safe and healthy.

Although we had to cancel many ICHS meetings and events this season, we have been active preserving and sharing history at a distance. Many of our board members have been busy in various ways. Several have participated in webinars through the Historical Society of Michigan. The Tri-River Museum Network has been beneficial as we share ideas, hopes and concerns moving forward. Several museums in the network have decided to keep their doors closed until next year.

I must say that it has been convenient living next door to the Blanchard House. I have been able to check on the house and grounds regularly. Most of the phone messages have been from telemarketers but I did receive a message from Vicksburg Historical Society's Board President, Don Wiertella. We had a lovely conversation and he is interested in putting together a group, much like Tri-River, that represents museums in the southwestern region of Michigan. He hadn't heard about the Tri-River Museum Network and I had told him the benefits of having such a group. None of our organizations have experienced a pandemic and all its repercussions. It has been comforting and reassuring to know that we are not in this alone. Between my discussion with Don and through Tri-River group emails, I discovered that many of us face similar problems. Most of us fall under the 501c-3 non-profit status and we face financial, membership and volunteer concerns.

I am happy to report that things have been getting done at the Blanchard House! Greg and I have cut down lots of weeds by the creek. Dave White whisked in with his large trailer and the fellows hauled away two large trailer loads of debris. Dave and Laurie have maintained the lawn beautifully during this time and I have been working in the gardens. Patty Simpson donated a flat of white

begonias and some mulch. Together we had a fun time planting the flowers and it made me feel homesick for "Work Thursdays" and the camaraderie that comes with it.

Hats off to Stacy Tchorzynski who helped us get a second grant through the Ionia Community Foundation. As you may recall, the back porch project was extended because we couldn't find a contractor to give us a bid last year. Now that Greg Cook is retired, he was able to look at the plans that David McCord designed and were approved by the State. Greg finished the project by the agreed upon extension of June 1, 2020.

One of the great things about the stay at home order is spending time on projects that I normally wouldn't have time for. I helped David McCord with a self-guided historical walking tour of Ionia. We decided that we would create different routes. The first "History Hike" is of the Downtown and Business District. I walked the route twice and it was exactly two miles and could be completed in an hour. Linda Ciangi has been working on all sorts of projects and she has continued to write her "Back in the Day" column which is published each week in the Ionia Sentinel Standard. I finally got a good start on researching the German Settlement in Ionia. We have received a number of emails from folks asking for research information on their homes or family members. In addition, we have been able to post on Facebook regularly. People love to look at area pictures and reminisce. It has been fun to hear their stories. It is the familiar faces and places that most find comfort in during these unprecedented times. A memory of home makes us feel safe and there are many who live outside of Ionia but still consider our wonderful town "home."

Our next board meeting, scheduled for June 24, 2020 at 7:00 at the Blanchard House. Right now, we plan to meet using masks and safe distancing measures. If that should change, I will let you know. We will discuss how to move forward while following the guidelines issued from the governor and Ionia County Health Department. Continue to stay safe!

— Kathleen



*ICHS Member Patty Simpson-Goeke tends to the gardens at the Blanchard House.*



# Our history marches on!

Greetings fellow ICHS members and friends —

As Secretary for the Historical Society, it is my job to record the minutes of the meetings and keep a file of the official goings-on of the Board of Directors, the committee reports, and general business of the organization.

Suddenly, that job was rendered nearly non-existent for the past few months. There have been no meetings and very little official business to make record of. But, to fulfill the obligation I have taken upon myself to the readers of our (now quarterly) Chronicle newsletter, I will share what I know about what's been happening instead of our regular schedule of monthly meetings, events, programs, and participation in community events.

The president's report appears on Page 1, wherein she recounts some of the challenges and future possibilities for our organization. We are not alone in these challenges, and have been able to share with other museums and historic homes various ways to cope with the situation.

## Maintenance and Grounds Committee:

The Blanchard House continues to be maintained at a reduced level to ensure that the building and its priceless contents are safe and surviving. Committee Chairman Dave White has maintained the grounds and monitored any problems that have arisen recently.

Stacy Tchorzynski shared the following information:

"We are proud to report that both rear exterior steps and porches have been refurbished. Project design was guided by historic preservation best practices, and we recognize David McCord for his beautifully detailed drawings and Greg Cook for expertly completing the work (as documented in the photos above). This project was funded in part by a generous \$1,000 grant from the Ionia County Community Foundation in 2019. Way to go project team, and thank you for donating approximately \$2,800 in labor and materials to bring this important project to life."

There has been some progress on the repurposing of the Carriage House. I have sorted and rearranged the content, built some shelving to store and display our collection of antique tools, inventoried much of that collection, and built a workbench that will allow the space to be a space for demonstration of period craftsmanship in future months. There's still quite a bit of work to do before it's done (mostly finding places to store the items that do

## 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!



*continued from page 2:*

not belong in the "workshop of yesteryear" concept) but it is coming along, inch by inch.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Our monetary obligations go on despite our much-reduced income due to cancelled fund-raising events. Mary Kimble, Treasurer, shares the following report:

"This financial report covers the period from April 2020 to June 1, 2020. Between April and June, we paid out \$1,953.29, which included our yearly property insurance of \$1,253.00, Consumers Energy, for two months, our quarterly bill for our security service, the phone and internet bill and water and sewer.

"We took in \$20.00 for a new membership, (welcome Robert Truesdell), \$130.00 from the gift shop, \$141.00 was taken in from our raffle, which means we took in \$291.00.

"For the record, the winners of our Raffle were: First Prize, James Hodges of Lowell; Second Prize Barb Ehlert; and Third Prize, Eric Kimble of Grand Rapids. Thanks to Linda Ciangi for chairing the raffle.

"Of course, even though we can't be open, the bills do not stop unfortunately. We are able to pay our bills so far, but, of course, we certainly can use some income."

### **Accessions Committee:**

Director Bryan Kimble reports on behalf of the Accessions Committee that "there has not been much done in our accessions department because of the Covid pandemic. We are working on implementing the nationally recognized nomenclature system for our artifacts. We are working on updating our records to include these identifier numbers in all of our collection. We are also working on getting our internet upgraded, so we can work more efficiently online."

### **The Rental Committee:**

All rentals have been cancelled until further notice, of course, but inventory is still in place when folks are once more able to gather at the Blanchard House. A few other gatherings that had been scheduled - most significantly the March meeting of the Tri-River Museums Network - had to be cancelled. (The house has been pretty quiet.)

### **Summer Sundays:**

The house has been closed to tours, but we will soon be able to welcome guests into the house again. There will be restrictions, but they won't generally be too much of a challenge for us. The real challenge will be getting volunteers to sign up to help on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 to 4:00. (*Please do!*)

I had hoped to host a couple of training sessions for tour guides back in April, which was (of course) cancelled. As soon as we know what restrictions may remain, I will set up some training times and publicize them on Facebook - so watch for that news online. (For those of you not using Facebook, please contact me if you're interested in tour-guide training.)

Through the efforts of Kathleen Cook, traffic on our Facebook page has gone way up! We are fast approaching 2,000 "likes" for the page, reflecting the interest and pride of Ionia's citizens in our local history. The response has been exceedingly positive.

Progress has also been made on the development of a new brochure for the Historical Society, to help us tell our story and stir up interest for tourism and education. As noted in the president's letter, we're also very close to publishing the new "History Hike" walking tour. It will be available through the ICHS Gift Shoppe very soon. Several other volumes are planned for self-guided tours through other historic districts around Ionia - so stay tuned to for those also.

So this is the part of my report where I usually record "the meeting was adjourned at such-and-such a time." Regularly scheduled meetings will be starting up soon, so keep an eye on the calendar. We will do our best to let you know when we're back on track!

— D. McCord, Secretary, 061020



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



# SOUVENIRS

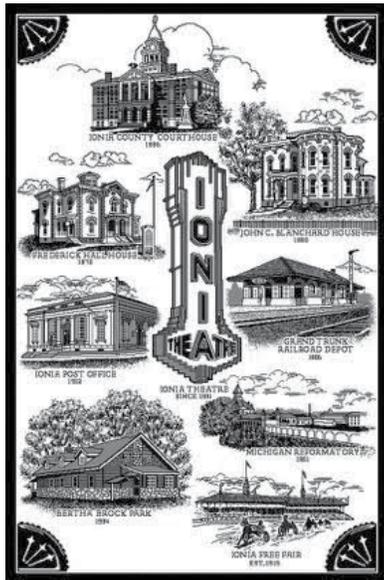
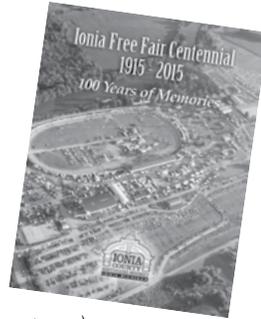
**MEMORIES & MOMENTOS**   **IONIA COUNTY**   **HERITAGE & HISTORY**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 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!



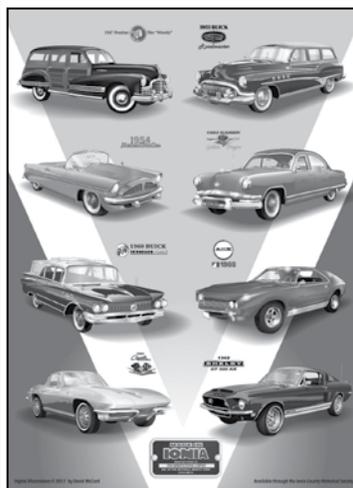
### ALSO AVAILABLE:

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 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

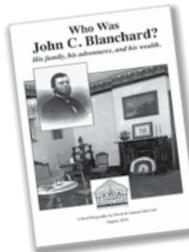
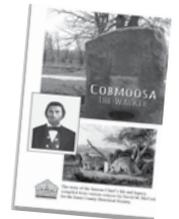
1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"

1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary

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

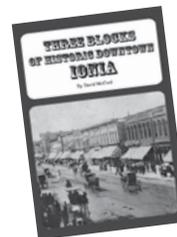
**DVDs are available for \$10 each!**

*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

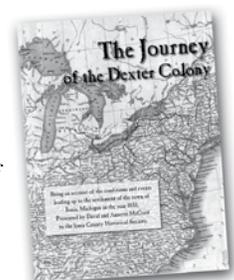
*A History of Bertha Brock Park on its 80th "Birthday"* by David McCord. \$6 each



*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)



# WAYBACK



## 1820 - 200 Years Ago:

On July 26 the Union Chain Bridge, a wrought iron suspension bridge designed by Captain Samuel Brown, opened across the River Tweed, between England and Scotland. The span of 449 feet (137 m) was the world's longest span for a vehicular bridge at the time.

The 1820 United States Census was conducted beginning in June with mailed surveys and information collecting offices. Eventually they determined the nations population at 9,638,453 of which 1,538,022 are slaves. That was 33% more people than in 1810. They recorded 8,765 persons in Michigan Territory, including a handful of residents of what is now Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Daniel Boone, American frontiersman and explorer, died at the age of 85 on September 26. He was at his son Nathan's home on Femme Osage Creek, five weeks short of his 86th birthday. His last words were, "I'm going now. My time has come." He was buried next to his wife Rebecca, who had died on March 18, 1813 about two miles from the present-day Marthasville, Missouri.



On September 28, 1820, Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson ate a tomato in public in Salem, New Jersey. He did it to prove that tomatoes are not poisonous, as most people thought at the time.

## 150 years ago —

The state of Georgia had been under martial law since 1865, and Congress readmitted Georgia to the Union in July 1868. In September of that year, white Republicans joined with Democrats to expel the three black senators and 25 black representatives from the General Assembly. A week later, in the southwest Georgia town of Camilla, white residents attacked a black Republican rally, killing 12 people. In response, in March of 1869, Congress once again barred Georgia's representatives from holding seats. That December, federal military rule was reimposed. The state's government repented, resolved to hold to the 14th Amendment earnestly, and the state of Georgia became last Confederate state to be readmitted to the US on July 15th, 1870.

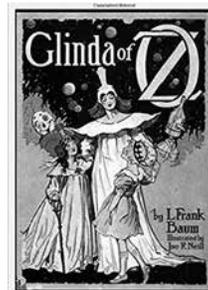


David Farragut, American Admiral, died on August 14th at the age of 69. He's the guy famed for saying "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead!" at the Battle of Mobile Bay in 1864.

Meanwhile in Europe, Napoleon III surrendered to Prussian armies at the Battle of Sedan. The next day, his government declared the Third French Republic, overthrowing Emperor Napoleon III. Ironically, Napoleon III was the elected as president of the Second French Republic. Two weeks

later, Rome was captured by Italian nationalists, concluding the Italian unification known as the Risorgimento. It marked both the final defeat of the Papal States under Pope Pius IX and the unification of the Italian peninsula under King Victor Emmanuel II.

The 1870 Census was conducted, including a new law, approved on May 6, 1870, which called for two procedural changes: The marshals were to submit the returns from the population questionnaire to the Census Office by September 10, 1870; all other questionnaires were due by October 1, 1870. Additionally, penalties for refusing to reply to enumerator inquiries were expanded to cover all questions asked on all questionnaires. In 1860, Ionia County had 16,665 inhabitants and ranked as the nineteenth county in the state. In 1870, it had 27,681 inhabitants, and ranked as the sixteenth.



## 100 years ago —

On July 10, 1920, Glinda of Oz, the 14th and last of L. Frank Baum's book series, was published 14 months after Baum's death.

The patent application was filed on July 22nd for the newly-invented playground structure of interlocking horizontal bars and uprights, called the "jungle gym" (also known as the "monkey bars") was filed by Chicago lawyer Sebastian Hinton and his company, Junglegym, Inc., under the title "climbing structure".



Hinton, a resident of Winnetka, Illinois, wrote in his application "I have designed a climbing apparatus, so proportioned and constructed that it provides a kind of forest top through which a troop of children may play in a manner somewhat similar to that of a troop of monkeys through the tree tops in a jungle." (U.S. Patent No. 1,471,465)

In British India, on August 1st, Mohandas K. Gandhi began the first of four stages of his non-cooperation movement with the British colonial government, as an extension of his Satyagraha (passive resistance) movement, by "giving up all titles and honors conferred by the crown" because Britain had failed to modify its policies regarding its Asian colonies.

The first World Scout Jamboree was hosted in London at the Olympia Exhibition Hall in West Kensington during August. Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who had founded the Boy Scouts in 1907, was celebrated by the 8,000 youth and adults who had come from around the world with a "shout of pure hero worship... acclaiming their one and undisputed chief and founder" with the honor of Chief Scout of the World. A successor would note later, "This had not been planned as a part of the Jamboree program but was a spontaneous decision by the assembled Scouts."



During the same week, the swastika was adopted as the official symbol of Germany's Nazi Party at a conference held in Salzburg, Austria.

On August 20th, the first commercial radio station in the United States, 8MK, began operations in Detroit. It was

*Continues...*

owned by William E. Scripps, owner of The Detroit News, and operated from the second floor of the Detroit News building. Elton Plant, an office boy at the News, opened the broadcast as the first U.S. radio announcer "because he had a good speaking and singing voice." The initial broadcast was "thought to have been heard by listeners in at least 30 Detroit homes."

Heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey knocked out challenger Billy Miske in the third round of a bout at Benton Harbor, Michigan on September 6th. The fight marked the first time a bout was broadcast over the radio, and the first time that Miske had been knocked out.



U.S. President Wilson was able to walk out of the White House on September 7th without assistance for the first time since his stroke the previous October. While a crowd watched from Pennsylvania Avenue, Wilson kept balance with a cane and "walked briskly" to a waiting automobile, then stepped in."

The "Raggedy Andy" doll (and the Raggedy Andy Stories book that accompanied the purchase) first went on sale on Sept 27th, two years after Johnny Gruelle first marketed the successful "Raggedy Ann" doll. Billed as the "brother to Raggedy Ann, first in affections of all little girls and very small boys", the seller noted that "Raggedy Andy has all the charm of his sister, personally and as hero of the new book by that name."

### 50 years ago -

The radio music countdown show American Top 40 made its debut on July 4th, with Casey Kasem as host. He played the most recent list of Top 40 most popular songs as ranked by Billboard magazine for the preceding week. The first song introduced (the #40 seller for the week) was Marvin Gaye's recording of "The End of Our Road", and the first number one hit was "Mama Told Me Not to Come" by Three Dog Night.



In what an author described later as "the most dramatic reversal in the history of U.S. policy toward Indians", President Nixon sent a special message to Congress on July 8 asking for legislation that would bring about "a new era in which the Indian future is determined by Indian acts and Indian decisions". Describing Native Americans as "the most deprived and most isolated minority group in our nation", President Nixon proposed a nine-point program. "Self-determination among the Indian people can and must be encouraged without the threat of eventual termination," he wrote in his message.



The next day, he proposed that Congress create the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). In his message to Congress, Nixon said that the changes would fulfill federal government commitment to "the rescue of our natural environment, and the preservation of the earth as a place both habitable by and hospitable to man".

On August 12, President Nixon signed a bill to create the independent United States Postal Service (USPS), and to abolish the existing United States Post Office Department. The transfer

of functions to the USPS would be effective July 1, 1971.

In September, Nixon launched the Sky Marshal Program began in on airline flights in the United States. Specially trained guards would be assigned to selected flights without advance notice. He also ordered the U.S. Department of Transportation to expand the use of walk-through metal detectors to 22 international airports.

On September 10, General Motors introduced the Chevrolet Vega, their entry into the "subcompact car" market. The price for the first model, the Vega 2300, was \$2,091. John Z. DeLorean was the general manager of GM's Chevrolet division at the time. The next day, the Ford Pinto was introduced. It was the second subcompact from the Ford Motor Company (after the Ford Maverick). Overshadowing GM's roll-out of the new Vega the day before, Ford announced that the car would sell for \$170 less. The first Ford Pinto was sold in Maryland to an elementary school teacher, Mr. Pinto, who lived in Pinto, Maryland.



In the entertainment industry, September was a month of beginnings and endings. On TV, the fall line-up included the premier of The Flip Wilson Show on NBC - the first TV variety show to be hosted by an African-American. The Mary Tyler Moore Show began a seven-season run as a situation comedy about a woman starting a new career as an associate TV news producer. The Odd Couple TV series, based on the Neil Simon stage play and film, premiered, with Tony Randall and Jack Klugman playing the roles of Felix Unger and Oscar Madison. The Partridge Family, a situation comedy



about a fictitious family of pop musicians, premiered on ABC television. Only two members of the cast, Shirley Jones and her stepson, David Cassidy, could actually sing or play a musical instrument, and a team of studio musicians and singers recorded the popular record albums and singles which the actors would lip sync to during the filming.

The longest running program on American television up to that time was Ted Mack's talent show "The Original Amateur Hour" was broadcast for the last time on Sept 27th. The television debut was on January 18, 1948 on the DuMont Television Network with Mack as the host.

On September 18th, American music legend Jimi Hendrix died in London at the age 27 from an overdose of sleeping pills. Hendrix, who had used amphetamines the night before, went to the Samrakand Hotel suite of a friend and took nine pills from her prescription of the German sleeping pill Vesparax. The recommended dosage was half a pill. He was taken to St. Mary Abbot's Hospital in London, and was dead on arrival.



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# 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, P.O. Box 176, Ionia, MI 48846.**

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

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

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

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

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

Please Check Your  
Membership Type:

- Regular Membership = \$20 Per Person
- Business Buddy = \$40
- Corporate = \$250
- Life Member = \$1000
- Student (under 18) FREE
- Enclosing an additional Gift = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am a:

- Renewing Member
- New Member

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

\_\_\_\_\_

Send my newsletter by US Mail.

Send a link to get my newsletter by email.

## Got something to donate?

The Historical Society accepts most donations of antique and vintage photos, documents, and 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 org.)



### Ionia County Historical Society 2020 Board of Directors and Officers

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



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# Thanks!