



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,

I love the summertime in Michigan and all the events that come with it. I am pleased that Missy Millard Mitchell includes the Historical Society as part of the car show each year. She allows us to set up a booth next to the registration table and we can sell a few things from our gift shop and talk about Ionia's hand in the history of automobiles made locally. At this event, I often walk away learning something new from some of those who worked in the factories.

Unfortunately, we have not had any rentals this summer, but the house is ready due to the cleaning efforts of the Tuesday and Wednesday volunteers. We have been open for tours each Sunday and those receiving the tour have been impressed. There are not very many historical societies that care for and maintain a Victorian House.

One of my favorite summer events is the Ionia Free Fair. This year we set up a small display in "Antique Village" in the Floral Building. I was reluctant to set up anything grand because the roof over our booth floods due to the leak in the roof. Karlee Bailey and others are working hard to raise funds to ensure that the building is maintained and preserved for future generations. To see a list of current needs, I recommend viewing their Facebook page, "Floral Building Happenings-Ionia Free Fair."

My favorite Free Fair event is the parade. This year, the theme was "Generations of Family Tradition", and we walked in the parade behind the Ionia Public Schools "WOW" bus. Both Emerson and Jefferson are celebrating their 100th birthday. I know that the schools proudly display the year 1922 on their façade but, according to the Ionia Sentinel Standard, the first day of school was on September 4, 1923. Jefferson was open the year prior but only the 1st through 4th grade were able to attend because the building wasn't complete yet. Lucy Cull, who was a 1st grade teacher and principal at that time, would take her students outside and let them watch some of the construction. I also learned that the bricklayers who were working on the Emerson building went on strike in November 1922. Thank goodness for those newspapers because they tell the whole story. As mentioned in previous newsletters, the same people who own the Sentinel Standard today also own the Allegan newspaper. Those bound copies of back issues are sitting in a landfill somewhere because nobody cared. Let me assure you that we care here in Ionia, and we are paying attention to the people, places and objects that link us to our past.

One of our most treasured historical items hangs in the Ionia County Courthouse today. The County Commissioners recently voted 4-3 at its meeting on June 13, to table a decision to donate the 21st Michigan Infantry Civil War Flag to Michigan's Save the Flag Program. The flag was given to the regiment by ladies in Ionia in September of 1862 with instructions to bring it home. It was carried to Kentucky, Georgia, and North Carolina, and was brought back to the Ionia County Courthouse on Independence Day in 1865. Most historical society members would like to see the flag remain in Ionia, but it needs preservation. Shane Houghton, active member of the American Legions and VFW's is working to raise funds to make this happen. Shane and I are meeting with the director of the Save the Flags Program on Tuesday to learn more.

As I get older, I find the connections to the past are what bring us together. When we reminisce about the past it is almost like reliving the experience. Once the fair leaves town, it seems like the beginning of another school year is about to begin. With the birth of my twin grandsons, and another daughter ready to have our third grandchild, it seems even more important to preserve what we must. It strengthens our sense of identity and it's what makes us Ionians.

— Kathleen

Ionia Free Fair Parade & Queens' Reception 2023





The Weekend of October 7 & 8

In 1873, the Village of Ionia, the County Seat and center of commerce in the vicinity, was incorporated as a City. This year, 2023, we commemorate that milestone with a celebration of Ionia over the past 150 years.

Plans for Saturday, October 7:

11:00 a.m. – Address from Mayor Dan Balice on the steps of City Hall, followed by a special appearance of Ionia's first Mayor, the Hon. Frederick Hall (accompanied by his wife and daughter).

Music provided by the Ionia Community Band

12:00 noon – City Hall will be open for guided tours until 1:00 p.m. including historic displays.

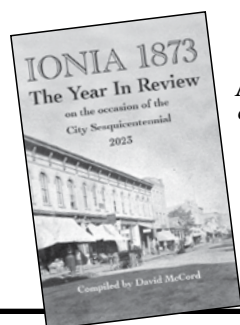
2:00 - 4:00 p.m. – **Ice Cream Social** at the Mercantile Bank Building - future home of the Ionia Community Library.

Several Main Street buildings will be open for tours. A walking tour guidebook and map of the Business District will be available for purchase from the ICHS.

Plans for Sunday, October 8:

1:00 - 6:00 p.m. – The Blanchard House will be open for guided tours, including the local history museum and Carriage House tool museum.

- Carnival games will be set up on the lawn
- Refreshments will be served (free will donation)
- Historical displays and information throughout



Also Available:

A new 40-page booklet entitled “**Ionia 1873 - the Year In Review**” Discover what Ionia was like during its year of incorporation. **Just \$8.00** from the Historical Society Gift Shop in the Blanchard House.

Save The Date:

Our calendar of upcoming events and activities. To verify current details, please visit our website.

- Wednesday, September 6, 7:00 p.m. — Monthly Membership Meeting at the Blanchard House **SPECIAL GUEST Bruce Doll from the Fallasburg Historical Society** will share info about their Historic Village and programs and activities.
- Sunday, September 10, 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. — **Saranac Cemetery Tour** (6173 David Hwy in Saranac). Several ICHS members are participating to benefit the Boston-Saranac Historical Society. \$5.00 per person.
- Wednesday, September 27, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.
- Wednesday, October 4, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS **Annual Meeting** and Election of Directors. Please have your dues paid for 2024 by this date so you can participate! (*Also making final plans for the Sesquicentennial.*)
- Saturday & Sunday, October 7 & 8 — **City of Ionia's Sesquicentennial Celebration** (see the story on this page). Many activities at the Blanchard House on Sunday afternoon!
- Sunday, October 22, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. — The annual Highland Park **Cemetery Tour** “Spirits of Ionia”. This year's theme is prominent Ionia citizens of 150 years ago, 1873.
- Wednesday, October 25, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.
- Tuesday, October 31, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. — Trick or Treat at the Blanchard House. Any help will be appreciated - please contact David McCord.
- Wednesday, November 1, 7:00 p.m. — Monthly Membership Meeting at the Blanchard House. *Presentation to be announced.*

As usual, all events and activities are open to the public, and all are subject to change. Please follow us on Facebook for the latest information, or contact a Board Member (listed on the back page) for more information.

WAYBACK



200 Years Ago — 1823

The “Indians Ottawas” sent a petition to the Great Father at Washington, petitioning on August 12, 1823, that there should be sent “a master or minister of the Gospel belonging to the same society as the members of the Catholic Society of St. Ignatius, formerly established at Michilimackinac and L’Arbre Croche by Father Marquette and other missionaries of the order of the Jesuits. They resided long among us. They cultivated a field on our territory to teach us the principles of agriculture and Christianity. If you grant us similar ministers we will invite them to live on the same ground formerly occupied by Father Du Jaunay, on the banks of Lake Michigan, near our Village of L’Arbre Croche.” The words just quoted are found in Shears History of the Catholic Missions Among the Indian Tribes of the

United States. Father Peter Du Jaunay was stationed at Mackinac until about 1765.



The first land office in Michigan which sold public lands, was opened at Detroit in 1818 and the second at Monroe in 1823. Three more were set up in the Territory over the next ten years: at Kalamazoo in 1831, at Flint in 1836, and at Ionia in 1836. Ionia’s land office is shown here on the right from an 1861 illustration.

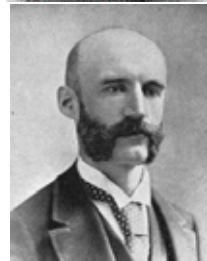
150 Years Ago — 1873

Excerpt from the new booklet “**Ionia 1873—the Year in Review**” by David McCord:

Mar 21 - The act incorporating Ionia as a city was approved. Over the next few weeks, plans were put into action to hold the first city elections. The city was apportioned into four wards, with elections ordered for mayor, clerk, treasurer, collector, justices, constables, aldermen, and supervisors.

Apr 8 - The first election in the new city of Ionia was held. The detailed results of that election:

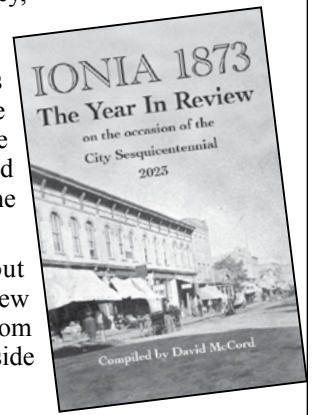
- Mayor — Frederick Hall (pictured at right)
- Clerk — Hiram A. Chapman
- Treasurer — Joseph L. Hudson (pictured below right)
- Collector — Charles W. Stone
- Justices (4)— John M. Stacy, Sylvester Taylor, William B. Thomas, Henry L. Mitchell
- Constables (4) — Daniel P. Chapman, Henry Ramlow, Andrew J. Welch, Oscar H. Dean
- Aldermen (8) —First Ward: G.F.D. Wilson, A. B. Morse, Isaac H. Thayer. Second Ward: George H. McMullen, John H. Tubbs. Third Ward: Osmond Tower, John L. Taylor, Walter D. Arnold. Fourth Ward: F. S. Hutchinson, William W. Mitchell



- Supervisors. — Mason Hearsey, Chauncey Waterbury

Early meetings were held in various halls and meeting rooms around the city at first, but “City Chambers” were established officially on the second floor of the Fire Barn. This was on the same site as the present City Hall.

Much more information about the year 1873 is collected in the new Sesquicentennial booklet, available from the Historical Society Gift Shop inside the John C. Blanchard House.



100 Years Ago — 1923



Warren G. Harding was president of the United States in 1923 until August 2. Calvin Coolidge (left) took over in the Oval Office after Harding died from a heart attack while on a tour of the western U.S.

The first home game was played at the Yankee Stadium between the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox. At the time it had the largest number of seats of any ball park in America. Babe Ruth hit a three-run home run into the right-field stands for the win.

In the world of entertainment: Warner Brothers Studio was formed in the spring of the year. The hottest movies of the summer were *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, starring Lon Chaney, and *The Ten Commandments* directed by Cecil B. DeMille. Harold Lloyd was the most popular comedic film star at the time. The great Louis Armstrong made his first recording that summer, too.

The big Hollywood Sign was erected. It originally spelled out “Hollywoodland”.



The Mount Etna volcano on the east coast of Sicily, Italy, erupted on June 19th, leaving 60,000 people homeless.

The Rosewood Massacre occurred in Florida. The entire town was burnt to the ground by members of the Ku Klux Klan.

50 Years Ago — 1973

A major fire destroyed the entire 6th floor of the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Missouri on July 12.

On July 16, former White House aide Alexander Butterfield informed the U.S. Senate Watergate Committee that President Richard Nixon had secretly recorded potentially incriminating conversations.

Skylab 3 (Owen Garriott, Jack Lousma,



WAYBACK *continued:*

and Alan Bean) was launched on July 28 to conduct a long list of medical and scientific experiments in orbit.

The U.S. bombing of Cambodia ended on August 15th, officially putting an end to 12 years of combat activity in Southeast Asia.

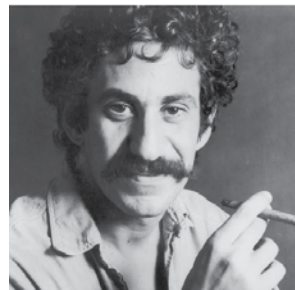
In the entertainment world:

The Summer Jam at Watkins Glen, a massive rock festival featuring the Grateful Dead, The Allman Brothers Band and The Band, attracted over 600,000 music fans.

The second film directed by George Lucas, *American Graffiti*, was released on August 11.

Singer Art Garfunkel finally released his solo debut album “Angel Clare” on September 11, 17 years after starting his career.

AMERICAN GRAFFITI



Singer-songwriter Jim Croce died on Sept 11 following a gig at Northwestern State University in Louisiana. The small chartered plane taking him to his next gig crashed on takeoff; all six people aboard were killed.

And on September 20 was “The Battle of the Sexes.” Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in a televised tennis match at the Astrodome in Houston, Texas. With an attendance of 30,492, this remains the largest live audience ever to see a tennis match in US history. The global audience that viewed on television in 36 countries is estimated at 90 million.

1973 IONIA CENTENNIAL!

The community celebrated the 100-year anniversary of “cityhood” in style!

The Historical Society has DVDs of the 1973 Centennial event in the gift shop. This video record will be shown at the Ionia Theatre as part of the 2023 Sesquicentennial Celebration (time to be determined). Here are a few of the artifacts from that festival, held 50 years ago:



WHAT'S THE FATE OF OUR FLAG?



During the Civil War, the ladies of Ionia created this outstanding Battle Flag for the 21st Michigan Infantry, and presented it to the unit on September 6th, 1862.

At the ceremony, just weeks before the soldiers were deployed, a speech was made by L. B. Soule, Esq., on behalf of the ladies to which Colonel A. A. Stevens, commanding the regiment, appropriately replied. Afterwards speeches were made by legislators Z. Chandler, T. W. Ferry, and F.W. Kellogg.

The flag given to the regiment was carried through all of its engagements. When the instructions were received by the Governor Crapo to return battle flags to the State after the war, the 21st did so with most of their flags. However, they felt that the flag that was given to them by the ladies of Ionia should be returned to them.

At a celebration on July 4, 1865, the flag was formally returned on behalf of the regiment to the ladies by the Hon. John Avery of Greenville, the highest-ranking officer of the regiment present, and was received on behalf of the ladies by the Hon. John B. Hutchins, of Ionia.

Now, in 2023, the County is considering the future of this priceless artifact. One of the options being discussed is to send the flag to the State Historical Center in Lansing. While this would preserve the flag, it would not be on public display to be shared and revered as it should be.

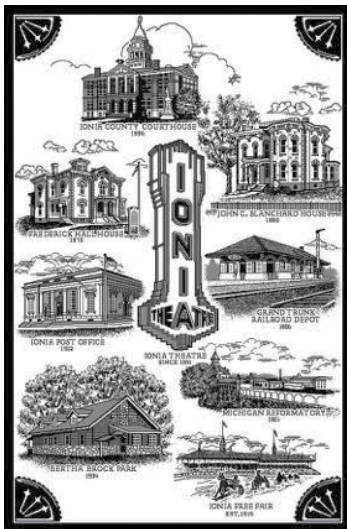
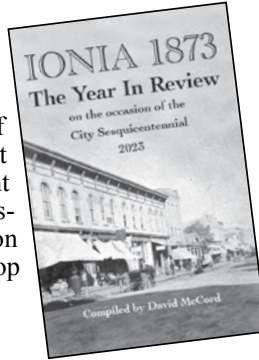
Please join us as we attempt to keep our precious treasure in Ionia “where it belongs.” Citizens are rallying to the cause, researching the options and considering how best to conserve the flag, formulating plans to finance the undertaking, and how best to display the artifact for the public to enjoy.

SOUVENIRS

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

Ionia 1873—The Year In Review

Compiled especially for the Sesquicentennial of the City of Ionia in 2023, this 40-page booklet presents a summary of life in the City of Ionia during the year of its incorporation. World and National news, Learn about local events, businesses, organizations, and prominent landmarks. Includes many period photos and statistics sure to entertain and educate. The newest addition to the ICHS Gift Shop Library—Just \$8.00!



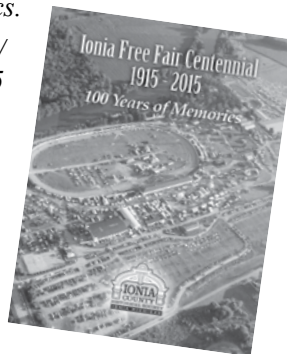
Do you have your souvenir Ionia History blanket yet? This attractive heavy throw is large, warm, and looks great in anyone's home. Available in shades of gray or burgundy. \$75 for this souvenir of Ionia. (\$65 for ICHS Members).

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 \$10 for post-)



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 and 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.)

Historic DVD Videos

The ICHS Gift Shop includes copies of several historic films on DVD, some professionally produced and others are copies of vintage footage donated by individuals.

Most significant is this 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!

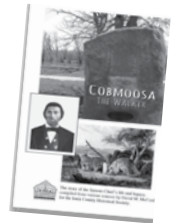


DVDs are available for \$10 each!



"History Hike - Vol. I" a walking Tour of Historic Downtown Ionia including a map and many colored pages of history by David McCord. \$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

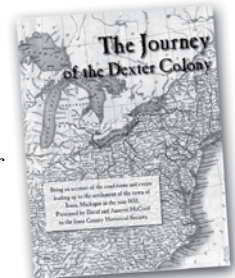


A History of Bertha Brock Park on its 80th "Birthday" by David McCord. \$6 each



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)



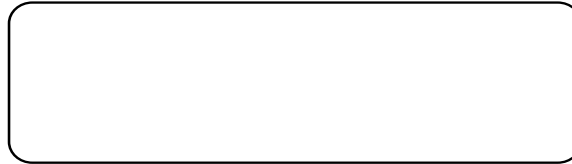


the CHRONICLE

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.

Ionia County Historical Society
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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.



MEMBER

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



Ionia County Historical Society 2022-23 Board of Directors and Officers

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- David McCord, Vice President — 616-902-0033
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- Stacy Tchorzynski, Director — 517-763-1770
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- Mary Kimble, Treasurer — 616-897-6592
- 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>



Visit us at www.IoniaHistory.org and find us on Facebook, too!

Thanks!