



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



## A Message from the ICHS President, Kathleen Cook

Dear ICHS Members and Friends,

I hope this letter finds all of you well. Some of you may think that we have been hibernating these last few months, but we have been very busy!

The board decided that the best use of our time would be to strategically plan. It was decided that we would obtain guidance from an exhibit coach. We are working with Suzanne Fischer who once worked for the Michigan History Museum in Lansing. She met with Stacy Tchorzynski and me and was able to tour the Blanchard House, Carriage House and look at our storage space at the National Bank Building. In addition, she will review our by-laws, rental agreement, etc. and make recommendations. She understands that our number one priority is the care and maintenance of the Blanchard House and local artifacts. I am excited to hear what she has to say so that we can best prioritize to ensure that we are following best practices for our museums.

Our “Wednesday Workdays” have been productive, and we are excited for the upcoming year. ICHS will be celebrating a

50th anniversary and David McCord has sent a press release to the Historical Society of Michigan to both publications, the Michigan Chronicle and Michigan History Magazine.

David just completed a booklet, “Hudsons in Ionia” and he is already busy working on a souvenir booklet for the ICHS’s 50th. We have not decided how we will celebrate our anniversary so if you are interested in helping us plan, reach out. Let’s make this a fun event!

Our first meeting of the year will be on April 3rd, at 7:00 p.m. at the Blanchard House. John Milewski, our new mayor, will be our special guest but he will not be the program. We are still working on that. I know that we will be discussing plans for the “Spring into the Past” event on Sunday, May 5th. (Typically, we would participate on Saturday too, but we have a rental.) The theme is “Notable Names” meaning landmarks named for local citizens. *If anyone is interested in help to put together a display on that subject, please let us know!*

Lastly, I have been meeting, (represented by David McCord when I have been unable) with Shane Houghton and other “Save the 21st Infantry Flag” committee members and I am happy to report that a large portion of the money has been raised. The Historical Society is not in charge saving the flag, but I consider it our community’s most historic item. A few ideas have been suggested as to how the Historical Society can support the effort, but I would like to hear your thoughts. *If this is something that you can help with, give me a call.*

— Kathleen Cook, ICHS President



## And a quick word from the V.P. David McCord

We’ve got several opportunities coming up for our members (**THAT’S YOU!**) to help the Historical Society fulfill our obligation to the community. Most of these are of the “easy and fun” variety (no, really), so if you find yourself with a few hours, you could make a great deal of difference!

- Firstly, the current **Board of Directors** has been in place for far too long. (This isn’t a complaint or protest—it’s based on what the ICHS ByLaws say.) So, the nominating committee (the entire Board) really, really needs several someones come forward and get on the ballot. If you’re at all interested, please contact one of the current Directors.

- As Kathleen mentioned, it’s the **50th Anniversary of the Historical Society** this year. We’re having some hand-outs printed up, and I’m putting together a little historical record to add to the archives. It would be fabulous if you’d like to

organize a celebration committee to commemorate the event!

- “**Spring Into the Past**” isn’t just a one-day thing, but a kick-off to the summer museum season. (See more info on the next page.) Most of the Tri-River museums keep these exhibits up all season, and we could to. If you’d like to help with that, contact me.

- We also need someone to help arrange our **Monthly Programs**. Our mission is to share our history and heritage, and presentations on historical subjects is a large part of what we do. Got any ideas?

- Summer Sundays are our main connection to the public. We can always use your help on a Sunday afternoon, too. A great way to meet folks and enjoy a few hours at the House!

- And if you have an affinity for the paperwork... well, you know who you are. Could sure use some help in that department, too.

So, there—I made the appeal. **Now let’s do some history!**

*(P.S. - Many thanks to the dedicated folks who have contributed so many hours to the organization in the past. Everyone contributes in their own way. -D.M.)*

# SOME HAPPENINGS DURING THE WINTER

Event though the public hours were paused for the colder months, there was plenty going on around the Blanchard House and beyond!



Our biggest “Historical Heroes” have been David Cusack and Stacy Tchorzynski! Stacy has been helping with planning and keeping an eye on the world of grant money, and worked diligently to help raise money for this year’s Heat the

House campaign. Santa was not too uncomfortable after all, thanks to many generous contributors to that fund!

Though we didn’t do much this year in the way of holiday decorations, we did get a tree up in the front parlor and a few other bits around the house. Here’s a photo (below) of David Cusack untangling some decorations for the big tree.



The Accessions Committee was hard a work (as time would allow) continuing to sort, catalog, and file artifacts in the ICBS collections. Once again, Mr. Cusack was very helpful in the technology department helping to make the computer connections much more efficient for Mary and Bryan Kimble, Lori Johnson, and the rest of the volunteers.

Again, David Cusack chipped in with help from a friend to do some serious cleaning and reorganizing in the Museum area. Many thanks for the hard work!

## Dungeons and Dragons turns 50!

Professional game master and board member of ICBS, David Cusack, will be hosting a Dungeons and Dragons session at the historic John C. Blanchard house in Ionia Sunday, March 17th, from 2 PM until 6 PM to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Dungeons and Dragons. Come experience the world’s greatest role-playing game!



Donations of \$20 per seat, which goes directly to the Ionia County Historical Society, will be accepted. Ages 16 and up.

### About the Game Master:

David Cusack has been playing D&D and other tabletop role-playing games since 1978 and is pictured with his D&D miniatures in the 1981 Ionia HS yearbook. Thus, David and D&D are undeniably a part of Ionia’s history! When COVID started, David began providing professional game master services online and has since run over 620 professional sessions. David is trained as a Certified Therapeutic Game Master and now regularly runs live Dungeons and Dragons sessions online and in person at conventions for 3rd party companies.

D&D is now officially a historic pastime, so this year, we plan to continue celebrating its history through live play sessions, including many more games at the Blanchard House to benefit the organization. If you know people interested in participating, please share this. We would love to talk to them!

New players are welcome; this is all about having fun, so do not be intimidated. Seating at these events is limited,



so please reach out to David Cusack to reserve a spot for the next adventure on Sunday, March 17th. Let’s kill some monsters!

# WAYBACK



## 1824 - 200 Years Ago —

In the spring of 1824, the Cumash tribe in the Spanish colony of California rebelled against the foreign power in their lands. The Spanish invaders The Mexican military finally put down the rebellion in late March. In May 1824, Friar Ripoll of Mission Santa Barbara wrote an appeal to the governor of California that defended and explained the actions of the Chumash, although his explanation was extremely bigoted. The defense was accepted by the governor, who issued a general pardon on May 16, 1824.

The spring of 1824 also saw the publication of "The Life of Mary Jemison" by James E. Seaver. It was a true account of Mary who had been abducted by Indians in Pennsylvania in 1758 and spent the rest of her life as a member of the Seneca tribe.

U.S. History is filled with challenges in the clash of indigenous cultures and European newcomers. Partly in response to these incidents, Henry Calhoun, Secretary of War at the time, formed the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington. (The Bureau was not officially authorized until 1832.)

One more item on the First Nations front; On May 26, the Arkansas Territory was split, creating Indian Territory (later called Oklahoma).

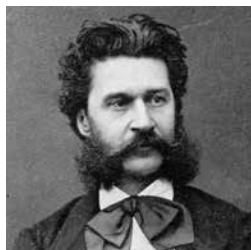
For something completely different, Ludwig von Beethoven's Ninth Symphony was first performed in Vienna on May 7th.



## 1874 - 150 Years Ago —

...and 50 years later, Johann Strauss Jr's opera "Die Fledermaus" premiered in Vienna (May 17th).

On March 18, the Kingdom of Hawaii signed a treaty with the United States granting exclusive trading rights.



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**IONIA:** The census of 1874 credited the young City of Ionia with a population of 3,251. The County was tallied at 28,376.

The city officers were: Mayor, James M. Kidd; clerk, C. H. Spencer; treasurer, John W. Baldie, marshal, Charles Broad; attorney, W. O. Webster. The police force consisted of the marshal and a night watchman, S. M. Norton.



Also in 1874 \$1,100 were expended for repairs to the County Building in Ionia's town square, and an addition was built on as well.

The Michigan Suffrage Association was formed in January of 1870. The public mind was prepared for the serious consideration of a suffrage amendment to the State Constitution which was submitted in 1874. With the overwhelming defeat of this measure, 40,077 voting for the amendment and 135,957 against it, the women received a set-back from which they did not easily recover.

## 1924 - 100 Years Ago —

On April 17, Metro Pictures, Goldwyn Pictures & Louis B Mayer Co merged to form Metro Goldwyn Mayer (MGM).

April 18: The first crossword puzzle is published by Simon & Schuster.

In May of this year, J. Edgar Hoover, a 29-year-old lawyer, became the U.S. Justice Department's Acting Director of the Bureau of Investigation, the predecessor to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).



U.S. President Calvin Coolidge signed an immigration law on May 26 to restrict immigration to the United States (photo below). The law includes the Asian Exclusion Act banning the entry of Asian peoples to the United States from a variety of countries. It's considered one of the most famous events in 1924.

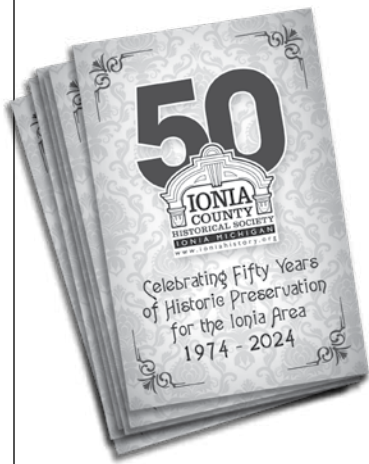
## 1974 - 50 Years Ago —

The last Japanese soldier, a guerrilla operating in the Philippines, surrendered on March 9th, 29 years after World War II ended.

Also in March, Chinese farmers discover the Terracotta Army near Xi'an, 8,000 clay warrior statues buried to guard the tomb of China's 1st emperor, Qin Shi Huang.







If you would like to help spread the word about the Historical Society's 50th this year, we have some handouts that you could share.

Take some to hand out at meetings, public gatherings, and bulletin boards. You can put them on a counter at your place of business - whatever you like.

Pick some up at the Blanchard House next time you're there!

## FREE MAGAZINES

The Historical Society has some free copies of history-related magazines at the Blanchard House. If you would like some, just help yourself. They're in the office!



The annual award-winning "Spring Into the Past" features all 28 of the Tri-River Museum Network members here in central lower Michigan. Most of the museums will be open both Saturday and Sunday (Ionia's Blanchard House will only be open on Sunday this year).

The theme for 2024 is "Notable Names." Each museum will be sharing info about their prominent citizens and what's named in their honor. Stop in and learn some of the people behind the names of our streets, parks, and buildings.

Copies of the Tri-River Directory for 2024 are available FREE at the Blanchard House.



## COMING UP:

To verify current details, please visit our website of Facebook.

- Wednesday, March 27, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.
- Wednesday, April 3, 7:00 p.m. — Membership meeting - the first after our "winter break." The program will include a report on recent acquisitions, and information about the **ICHS 50th anniversary this year!**
- Wednesday, April 24, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.
- Wednesday, May 1, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Monthly Public Program at the Blanchard House. (*program to be announced*)
- Sunday, May 5, 12:00 - 5:00p.m. — ICHS officially begins the 2024 season with the annual "**Spring Into the Past**" celebration (see details below)
- Wednesday, May 29, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.
- Wednesday, June 5, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Monthly Public Program at the Blanchard House. (*program to be announced*)
- Wednesday, June 26, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Business Meeting at the Blanchard House.
- Wednesday, July 3, 7:00 p.m. — ICHS Annual **Independence Day Pot-Luck Dinner** - the public is very welcome!!!

**SUMMER SUNDAYS** at the Blanchard House will commence again this year sometime in May (specifics to be announced). The house will be open for tours from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. *PLEASE, if you can spare a few hours, extra volunteers are always welcomed!*

NOTE: If you have any ideas or suggestions for programs or presentations of historical subjects, collections, or local information, PLEASE let us know. Even better, if you'd be interested in helping to arrange our schedule of monthly presentations, that would be outstanding!

**MORE EVENTS WILL BE FORTHCOMING**, so keep in touch through Facebook and be sure to attend our meetings, too!

# SOUVENIRS

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

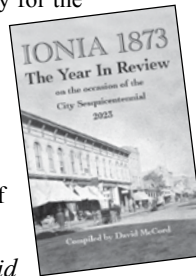


### Hudsons in Ionia

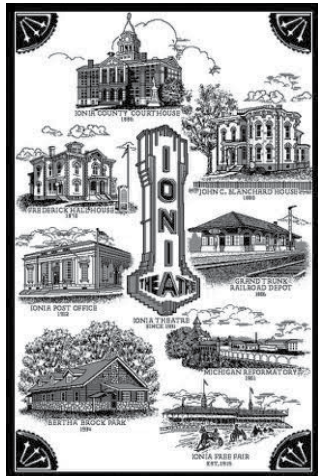
*Our latest addition to the gift shop about the famed retail magnate and his early business ventures in Ionia. Written by David McCord. \$6 each*

### 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 and events in the City of Ionia during the year of its incorporation.



*Compiled by David McCord. Just \$10 each*



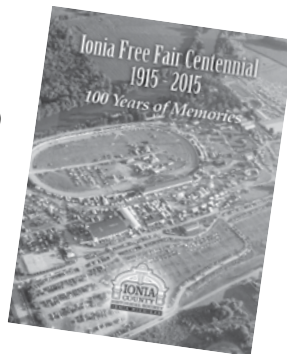
*Do you have your souvenir Ionia History blanket yet? This attractive heavy throw is large, warm, and looks great in anyone's home. Available in shades of gray or burgundy with artwork by David McCord. \$75 for this unique souvenir of Ionia. (\$65 for ICHS Members).*

## 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 postage)*



## 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!*

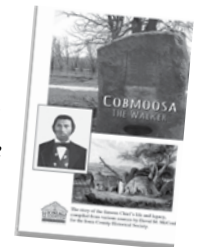


**DVDs are available for \$10 each!**



*"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*



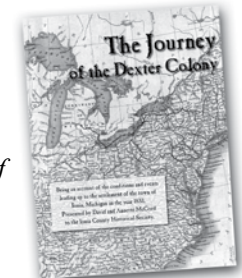
*Who Was John C. Blanchard? A biography of one of Ionia's leading businessmen. by David McCord. \$6 each*

*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)*



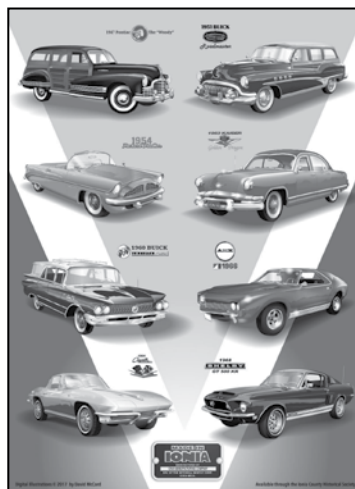
## ALSO AVAILABLE:

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.)*

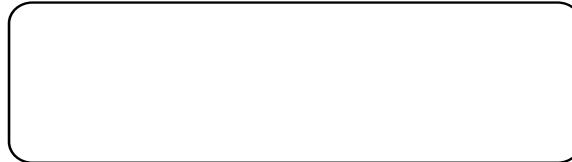


# the CHRONICLE

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

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

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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 2021-22 Board of Directors and Officers

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- David McCord, Vice President — 616-902-0033
- Bryan Kimble, Director — 616-897-6592
- Stacy Tchorzynski, Director — 517-763-1770
- Dave Cusack, Director — 517-763-1770
- Linda Ciangi, Secretary — 616-527-4945
- Mary Kimble, Treasurer — 616-897-6592
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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>



Visit us at [www.IoniaHistory.org](http://www.IoniaHistory.org)  
and find us on Facebook, too!

# Thanks!