



Holiday Pot-Luck!

The December 6th meeting of the Ionia County Historical Society was our annual Christmas Pot-Luck. Members and guests enjoyed a terrific selection of foods (as usual) and saw the Blanchard House embellished with a variety of holiday decorations. (Many thanks to the decorators!)

During the gathering, President Linda Ciangi took a few minutes to share some business.

Minutes (briefly) —

The Blanchard House rental for the 19th of December was rescheduled for January 9th. The new back door, completely rebuilt by John Lepien, is done and ready to be installed once the weather breaks. The annual furnace check-up is scheduled for December 7th, donated by Wilson Heating, and the fire extinguishers will be inspected the same day.

Michigan One Credit Union donated \$500 to the ICHS (a nice Christmas present!). Thank-you cards were passed around for signatures to M1 and also to Sid's Flower Shop for donating the garlands on the Blanchard House.

Linda has had S&K Printing copy a newly found historic photo of downtown Ionia which can be offered for sale in the gift shop. Also regarding ICHS souvenirs, Phil Kahl recently received a metal Christmas ornament from Dale Parus which is a representation of the Hall-Fowler house. It had been produced by the Friends of the Library some years ago as a fund-raiser. Phil suggested that the ICHS look into creating one for the Blanchard House. Linda C. passed around a "White House" ornament as another example of the same kind of thing. She will look into the cost of such an item and bring it to the Board as a possible investment for next year.

Linda asked the members if she could send a packet of the "Cars made in Ionia" postcards to the folks who have driven their cars in the Free Fair parade on our behalf. This would be a combination thank-you and Christmas greeting. The members said "yes."



Ed Bently, local art collector and restorer, asked if we would be interested in hosting an art show in the Blanchard House for a month or so next year. This too met with support from the members at the meeting.

Kitty Cole has offered to present a program to the July meeting (our annual Independence Day pot-luck) about her experiences in catering to the stars at the Ionia Free Fair.

Linda has asked Kathleen Cooke to look into setting up a raffle for 2018, and Stacy Tchorzynski to check on grant applications for the Ionia County Community Foundation.

ICHS member Shawna Hoekstra is involved in the "Wreaths Across America" project on behalf of the Civil Air Patrol. They will be placing memorial wreaths at Sunset Memorial Gardens on Saturday, Dec. 16, starting at 11:00 a.m. If members would like to help, please stop by.

Scheduling a Board Meeting for December has proven to be a challenge, considering everyone's holiday plans and activities. Linda asked if the Board could meet on December 27th. With some Board members not present, this will need to be finalized at some future time (soon).

Treasurer Annette McCord reported that the recent "Murder Mystery" event at the Blanchard House, sponsored by the Friends of the Library, was a success. It garnered some income for the ICHS, split with the FOTL. Linda C. also presented her with income from the recent gift sales at the Mrs. Claus Bazaar and FUMC Holiday Bazaar.

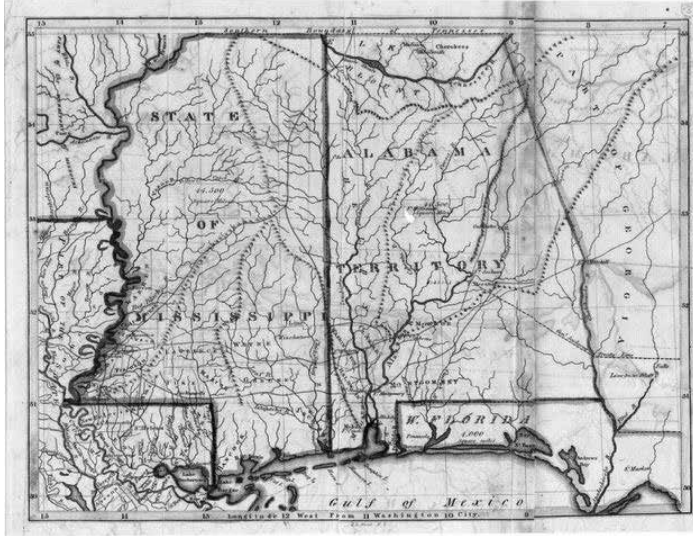
The Blanchard House will be open for tours on December 10th & 17th, staffed by David & Annette McCord, Linda Ciangi, and Barb Ehlert. Others are welcomed to join us!

The January 3rd meeting will be held at the Lamplight Grill on Main Street, where members and guests can order from the menu for dinner. This dinner is in honor of Hank Knoop.

THE WAYBACK MACHINE

December 1817 —

In early 1817, Mississippi was divided into the state of Mississippi and the Alabama Territory. Mississippi was admitted as the 20th state of the Union later that same year, on December 10. David Holmes was elected the first state governor.



President James Monroe appointed John C. Calhoun of South Carolina as Secretary of War, and William Wirt of Maryland, as Attorney-General. Conflict arose along the coast of Florida when Amelia Island was taken over by buccaneers. The invaders, under the command of the famous General Gregor MacGregor of Venezuela, claimed sovereignty in the vicinity, harassing ships in the neighboring waters. U.S. Marines were dispatched on December 23rd, while at the same time General Andrew Jackson was leading a “punitive expedition” into northern Florida to confront the Seminole Indians.



Jane Austen’s novels *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were both published in this month, four months after her death at the age of 42.

In December of 1817, the legislative council of the State of Michigan passed an act for incorporating the Bank of Michigan, naming the following as first directors: Solomon Sibley, Stephen Mack, Henry L. Hunt, Abraham Edwards, John R. Williams, Phillip Lecuyer, and William Brown.

The bank was officially organized and opened for business in June of 1818 and served the state’s financial community for 24 years.

December 1867 —

John Terry was appointed the first lighthouse keeper at the Sand Point Lighthouse in Escanaba. Construction began in the fall of the year, and was not completed until the spring of 1868, Unfortunately, Mr. Terry died in April, but his wife, Mary, was

appointed to take his post, becoming one of the first female lighthouse keepers on the Great Lakes.

Construction of the Pere Marquette Railroad westward from Saginaw commenced in 1866 with the first section of 20 miles (32 km), to Midland, opened December 1, 1867. In the Annual Report to the Stockholders of December 31, 1867, the secretary of the F&PM, Henry C. Potter, called for the continued building of the line toward Lake Michigan. After grappling with financial difficulties for many years, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad opened service between Bridge Street in Grand Rapids to Cedar Springs, Michigan, on December 25, 1867, a distance of about 20 miles (32 km). A group of investors began building the Jackson, Lansing and Saginaw Railroad north from Jackson in 1865. By December of that year, their line reached Mason and Lansing. In December, 1867, the railroad attained its northern terminus in Bay City.



Former Minnesota farmer Oliver Hudson Kelley founded the Order of the Patrons of Husbandry (better known today as the Grange). The organization was started in 1867 “to advance methods of agriculture, as well as to promote the social and economic needs of farmers in the United States.” The group lobbied on behalf of the farming industry for fair rates from the railroad monopolies, and supported the silver standard through the populist party to free up capital for the benefit of agriculture. In 2005, the Grange had a membership of 160,000, with organizations in 2,100 communities in 36 states.

December 1917 —

A severe cold wave in interior Alaska produced the coldest recorded mean monthly temperatures in the United States. Fort Yukon averaged -48.3°F and Eagle -46°F . December 1917 through January 1918 still stands today as the coldest and snowiest December-January. Every station in Michigan reported record snow during these two months, and blizzards raged as far south as Lexington, KY.

Continues...

Thanks to our
ICHS “Business Buddies”

Dan Balice
Darin Elliott
Larry Heffelfinger
Lyle Joslyn
Glen Rairigh
Todd Reurink

Rich and Lindsay Thompson



On Dec. 6, 1917, about 2,000 people were killed when an explosives-laden French cargo ship, the Mont Blanc, collided with the Norwegian vessel Imo at the harbor in Halifax, Nova Scotia, setting off a blast that devastated the Canadian city. Mont-Blanc carried 2,653 tons of various explosives, mostly picric acid. After the collision the ship caught fire, drifted into town, and exploded. It was the greatest man-made explosion in history prior to the atom bomb at Hiroshima.

On December 6, U.S. Navy destroyer USS Jacob Jones was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic Ocean by German submarine U-53, killing 66 crew in the first significant American naval loss of the war. The United States declared war on German ally Austria-Hungary on December 7, 1917.

The day after Christmas, President Woodrow Wilson used the Federal Possession and Control Act to place most U.S. railroads under the United States Railroad Administration, with the aim of transporting troops and materials for the war effort more efficiently.

December 1967 —

A mumps vaccine was licensed during this month. The five states with the highest 4-year average rates of mumps in persons under the age of 18 were Washington, Oregon, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan.

Doctor Christiaan Barnard performed the world's first human heart transplant operation on December 3rd, in an operation assisted by his brother, Marius Barnard; the operation lasted nine hours and used a team of thirty people. The patient, Louis Washkansky, was a 54-year-old grocer, suffering from diabetes and incurable heart disease. The donor heart came from a young woman, Denise Darvall, who had been rendered brain damaged in an accident on December 2, 1967, while crossing a street in Cape Town. Washkansky survived the operation and lived for 18 days.



Our Calendar of Upcoming Events.

PROGRAMS for 2018 are as follows:

January: New Year's Dinner at the Lamplight
February: L&D Hardware building
March: Lyons-Muir Museum
April: "Road Building"
May: Music by Three Husbands on the Loose
AND MORE TO COME...

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

On December 9, 1967, police arrested Doors' front man Jim Morrison as he performed on stage at the New Haven Arena. An incident that took place between Morrison and a police officer before the show led to Morrison's public arrest, making him the first rock star ever taken into custody during the middle of a performance. The next day, singer Otis Redding, 26, and six others were killed when their plane crashed into Wisconsin's Lake Monona; one passenger, Ben Cauley, survived.



Also in December, "guitar god" Jimi Hendrix played at set at the now-closed Fifth Dimension in Ann Arbor. The venue was a bowling alley converted into a concert hall before later becoming a restaurant. This was Hendrix's first tour of the U.S. (The top song of the month was "To Sir With Love" by British pop singer Lulu.)



Michigan governor George Romney visited Vietnam for a second time, hoping to bolster his popularity ratings during his bid for the presidency. When he visited the war zone in 1965 he had supported the war, but now his position was reversed. After dealing with the Detroit riots in the summer of '67, he had some serious campaigning to do, overshadowed by fellow candidates Richard Nixon and Nelson Rockefeller.

On Dec. 14, 1967, a blizzard hit the Navajo and Hopi Nations, covering the ground with as much as seven feet of snow, trapping residents in homes. It was the worst recorded snow storm in Arizona history.

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IONIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

IONIA MICHIGAN



P.O. Box 176 • 251 East Main Street • Ionia, MI 48846
www.ioniahistory.org

From the President:

Congratulations to ICHS Vice-President Allison Cook who is the newly elected City Clerk for Ionia. Ally continues a family tradition of service to the community.

Thank you to Rose Scheller, Laurie Brooks and Steven Lehman for assisting Barb Ehlert with cleaning and decorating the main floor of the Blanchard House for Christmas.

The Brick Street Marketplace on Main St. has decorated their walls with Ionia pictures shared by our society. Joe Cantwell will do the same soon in his location next to Wilson Heating that was part of the Hudson family business. Reproductions were done by S & K Printing. Thank you to Tyler Basler and Mary Kimble.

The Jewel Box has opened in the former Trier's store and features State of Michigan and Ionia gift items. Unique treasures from Ionia history are on display.

Thank you to Father Mason for entrusting his charming, one-of-a-kind doll house to us. It is on display in the upstairs master bedroom.

Goose Elliott raked and bagged Gingko leaves, Olivia Miller helped Dave White with leaf removal and their efforts are appreciated. It's a big yard!

Karen Bota of the Sentinel-Standard shared photos of the basement displays in the "Back in the Day" column and the paper continues to support our activities and mission. The train display pictured in that column celebrates the many ways the train benefited Ionia. It was used to carry troops, bring us the mail, the fair, and folks who came on the "Snow train." Goods from the factory, beginning with Ypsilanti Reed Furniture, were sent around the world. Celebrities, salesmen and local travelers were transported to and from Ionia.

As we celebrate 2018 and Ionia's 185th birthday, I look forward to sharing the story of our history and making plans for a productive and prosperous future.

Linda Ciangi

SOUVENIRS

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

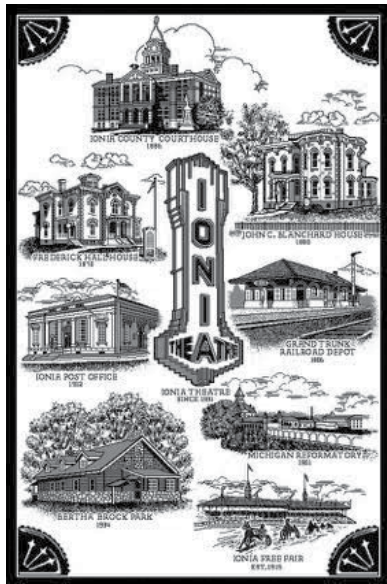
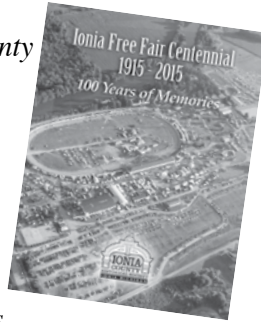
The newest addition to our collection of Ionia County memorabilia, the masterwork for 2016:

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

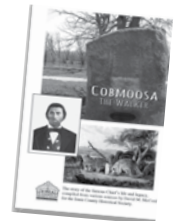
1937 Ionia Airport Inaugural plus Bertha Brock Park's 1940 "Winter Festival"

1973 Ionia Centennial Documentary

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

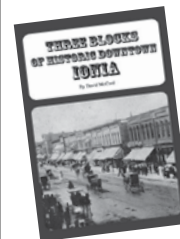
DVDs are available for \$10 each!

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

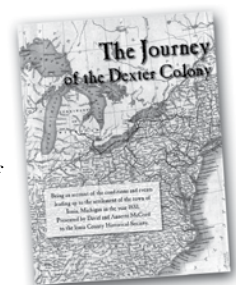
A History of Bertha Brock Park on its 80th "Birthday" by David McCord. \$6 each



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!

JUST IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS!



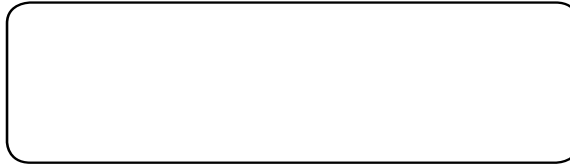
A new addition to the ICHS Gift Shoppe, the 18x24-inch poster on heavy gloss paper sells for \$15, and the packet of NINE "Made in Ionia" automobile postcards are just \$10. (Artwork by David McCord; proceeds go to the ICHS.)



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
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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, care of Box 176, Ionia, MI 48846.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St., Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Please Check Your
Membership Type:

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

Please Share a
Little Information:

- Renewing Member
- New Member

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

Thanks!

Have you got something to donate?

The Historical Society accepts most donations of antique and vintage photos, documents, or larger artifacts IF they are relevant to Ionia's history in some way. Please contact a board member for more information, and be sure to get a receipt for your donation—it may be tax-deductible! (We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.)

Ionia County Historical Society 2018 Board of Directors & Officers

- Linda Ciangi, President — 616-527-4945
- Ally Cook, Vice President — 616-821-1406
- Dave White, Director — 989-855-2350
- Goose Elliott, Director — 616 755 2486
- Stacy Tchorzynski, Director — 517-763-1770
- David McCord, Secretary — 616-527-3784
- Annette McCord, Interim Treasurer — 616-527-3784
- Kathleen Cook, Treasurer — 616-527-2626
- Barb Ehlert, House Rentals — 616-522-0844

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