

## HISTORY OF IONIA COUNTY JAILS

### 1851

Ionia County's first jail was completed in 1850 and first occupied in January 1851. Prior to the building of the jail, inmates had been incarcerated in the Kent County Jail. Rooms for dwelling purposes were constructed in 1864. At the time of Sheriff Wm. H. Mattson's time in office, the jail had become unfit for housing inmates. In April of 1880, a proposal to appropriate \$10,000 to build a new jail was submitted to the residents of the county and was passed by a vote of 2838 to 2206. Building of the new jail began in July 1880 and was completed in January of 1881.

In July of 1881, the first jail was moved by large horses and roller logs to its current location on Lafayette Street. \*1

### 1881



The new jail opened in January of 1881. An article from the Ionia Daily Sentinel dated January 5, 1881 told of the new jail being practically completed and reflecting the highest credit upon the county and all concerned. The exterior of the building was composed of Ionia sandstone and brick. The interior of the dwelling was divided into a house for the sheriff and family, sheriff's business office, and the jail. There were 13 cells; one separate from the others for female inmates. The cellar held a large range, vegetable and wood rooms, furnace, pantry, and kitchen. The article noted that, "The kitchen and sinks are supplied with water by simply turning a faucet." \*2

**1957**



After 74 years of use, it was once again time to ask the tax payers to build a new jail. The construction began in 1955 with the “new jail” opening its doors to the public on July 14, 1957 for an open house and tour. Inmates were transferred from the old jail later that week.

**1990**



Out of necessity and constant threat of federal lawsuits, Ionia County was faced with building a new and larger jail. Sheriff Terrence Jungel led this endeavor and in January 1990 the new 122-bed jail on Adams Street was completed. With concerns of jail overcrowding, the number of beds was increased in 2004 to 132 and to 141 in 2013.

\*1 – History of Ionia and Montcalm Counties, Michigan – 1881

\*2 – Ionia Daily Sentinel, Wednesday, January 5, 1881