

JENISON HISTORY

July 2013

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www.jenisonhistory.org

JENISON HISTORICAL
ASSOCIATION
PO Box 664
Jenison, Michigan 49429
TELEPHONE
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Our mission is to learn about Jenison history, obtain artifacts relating to its history, and maintain the Jenison Historical Museum as a place to share and display our heritage.

ISAAC LOWING

Editors Note: In keeping with our theme for the year, as long as content is available, we will try and focus these writings on the early families of Jenison. This excerpt from the Michigan Lowing History and taken from accounts of Isaac Lowing. Isaac and his family are counted as some of the earliest settlers in the area we now call Jenison. Isaac and his wife Lavina had 9 children; William, Stephen, James, Holden, Isaac, Mary, Ulysses, Cordelia and Elizabeth.

In the early 1830's the Michigan Land and Timber Speculation craze hit New York State. Every one that could raise money left for Michigan and bought land or timber, either for homes or speculation. In 1836, Isaac's son, Stephen, at nineteen, walked to the Grand River Valley, and purchased eighty acres of land in Georgetown. He worked in Grand Haven and earned enough money to pay for most of the land. He built a cabin, and then in the spring of 1838, he walked back to New York, and gave such glowing accounts of the fine prospects for the whole family in Michigan that his brother Holden returned with him in 1841. By then Stephen had married and his wife and infant accompanied him along with two pair of oxen and household goods. In the spring of

Riverboat Tour on the Grand Lady

Saturday, July 20, 2013

12-2 PM

775 Taylor St Jenison, MI

\$10 per person * Under 2 yrs-Free

Reserve your tickets or for more information, call

Liz Timmer

616-457-3708

Tickets must be purchased in advance, no ticket sales available the day of the tour.

Bring your lunch, but Drinks must be purchased on the Boat.

After the tour, the Museum will be open from 2:30 to 4 PM



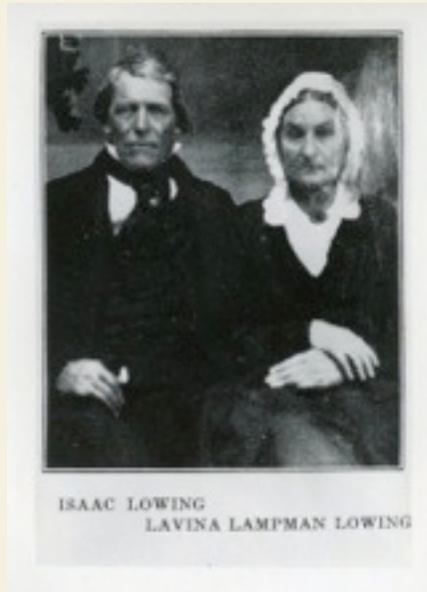
ISAAC LOWING (CONT)

1842, Isaac came alone by way of the Lakes. He purchased land south of Stephen's and with the help of his son Holden, began to chop out another home and farm.

They built a log cabin, large enough to accommodate the big family, and during the fast winter, Isaac, Holden and Frank Bosworth, who had taken up land nearby, lived in this new cabin. Isaac was then 48 years old. The land was densely covered with timber. Isaac, having much experience, began to chop out another farm; hoping to have a garden spot and some fences built before the family arrived. Another son, Isaac, arrived in the spring of 1843. So the father had help all that summer.

The family arrived October 18th. 1843. James brought the three sisters and his mother Lavina around the lakes and up the Grand River on a steamer to Stephen's place. The Lake trip had taken them fifteen days, and a storm raged the whole distance. It was late when they arrived at Stephen's and as the family was tired, he persuaded them to stay all night, rather than cross the woods in the dark. They moved out the few pieces of furniture and laid their feather beds on the floor. In the middle of the night Ruth, Stephen's wife was taken with the pains of childbirth, so the children were awakened, dressed, and a man was asked to guide them to their father's home about one mile away. The man carried pine knots that he lighted to assist them in keeping the narrow path through the dense

woods. In crossing a creek on a log, Elizabeth who was only ten years old lost her balance and fell in. With the excitement of getting her out, the man dropped the pine knot in the water, and they had to finish the



journey in the dark. With the man in front they held on to him and each other, and fairly felt their way along. The children never forgot that night trip to their new home in Michigan.

The winter of 1843-44 was one of the hardest the pioneers ever had to face in Michigan. Winter came early and it was known as the "Winter of Storms". Snow was so deep that most of the settlers lacked food for themselves as well as their animals. The hogs that had not been killed for food, had wandered away, and either fended for themselves or starved. The men cut down trees, and dug paths to them

so that their cattle might reach this meager food. The cold was so severe that most of the people could not keep warm in their poorly constructed homes, and there were many colds and much sickness.

That spring Franklin Bosworth and our Grandfather Isaac walked to Ada where they each purchased a pig, which were mere skeletons but the best they could find. They began by driving them, and ended by carrying them. When Isaac arrived home with his it fell over and died either from starvation or exhaustion.



The next ten or fifteen years Isaac spent in clearing his land and bettering his conditions. In 1847, the long proposed State road that was to pass in front of their home became an actuality. It was little better than the logging trails that were beginning to be built through the area, but it did connect with other laid out roads, and was the beginning of a road-connection between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids.

In 1845, a schoolhouse was built, and became Georgetown No. 1, later known as the Canada Hill School. Isaac and his sons helped in the construction of this building. Miss Ann Evarts was the first teacher in this frame building that had cost \$112 to build. In 1845, there were only 133 people in Georgetown so one

ISAAC LOWING (CONT')

can know there was not a large enrollment of children in this school.

The State Road was often almost impassible, and for years it was called "Mud Highway" or "Mud Street Road".

Isaac never gained wealth, but he lived comfortably, and as his circumstances improved he added a room or two to his cabin. In this place he lived until his wife died in 1868. He was 74, at the time and Holden built a room on his home for his father, and here he died at the age of 82 in the year of 1876.

Isaac and his wife Lavina are buried in the old cemetery that adjoined Holden's Farm, at the north end of

the now so-called Grange Hall Road.

Isaac Lowing's decendents are scattered all over the United States.

Isaac loved to read and kept himself posted on the current issues of the day. Lavina could not read or write and was very sensitive about not being able to do so. She loved to have her husband read to her and absorbed everything so that she never let any one know that she did not read the item herself. When Holden or Franklin kept the Post Offices in their homes she loved to go there in order to distribute the mail. She learned to recognize the names by sight, and would hand out the mail as accurately as anyone. Whenever she made a mistake she

always covered by saying "My eyesight isn't what it used to be". She taught her daughter to become capable and experienced pioneer women. She was proud of all her sons and said every one of them had the makings of first-class lawyers.

She smoked a pipe, as did many of the pioneer women of that day. Her children greatly admired her capabilities, and felt their traits of ambition, courage, integrity, demand for education and the better things of life were inherited from her.



Museum Happenings

Open Houses 2013

This year we are focusing on the families of Jenison. Though the family names listed here, are not inclusive of the area's we are focusing on, these are some of the more well known families. We invite you to join us with information, stories and pictures to help fill in to the blanks with information not currently in our files.

Year to Date (or what you missed if you haven't stopped by this year)

March we focused on the families along Port Sheldon Road to the south of town, such as, Andre,

Bliss, Gezon and Abe Verstrate. Many members of the Andre family were in attendance, which made for a lively discussion and much laughter.

The display included photos of the families, homes and farms.

In April our focus was on the families along Port Sheldon Road West near the Bursley school area; such as Jenison's and Beardsley's. What fun we had talking with the Jenison families that attended

In May we moved into 'Jenisonville' and focus on the Moody, Ohler, Luman Jenison, DuBois and Piers families.

June we focused on the families along the Grand River; such as, Lowing, Haire, Boynton and Wallin. For July we will stay along the river and take our annual Riverboat Tour

July 2013

We will take our ride on the Grand Lady Riverboat. Tickets are available by calling Liz Timmer at 616-457-3708

Last year our trip was shortened after being stuck on a sand bar and our 'adventure' made local news. Hopefully the



river will allow us to make the entire trip this year, but this is always a highlight of our year, regardless.

September 2013

Back to our families of Jenison this month, and we will focus on the Families that lived in the Museum; such as, Husband, Elsie Martin, Hanchet and Tiffany's.

October 2013

October we finish our family tour of Jenison with a focus on the farms in Georgetown Township; such as Westrate, Steen, Bosworth, and Sweet.

Watch the calendar on the web for more upcoming events. •
(www.jenisonhistory.org)

We look forward to seeing you, and if you would like to

volunteer to help at any of these events, please contact the museum at 457-4398 or email us at info@jenisonhistory.org.

Are you a member??

If you are not a dues paying member, please consider joining to help support the Association. Dues are a bargain at only \$10 per year, you will receive monthly updates to the happenings of the Association. Contact the JHA at info@jenisonhistory.org, or calling the museum

616-457-4398

Web Site:

Keep up to date on the events and meeting times by visiting us on the website at www.jenisonhistory.org.



Collectable Souvenir honoring Jenison history

Help Support Jenison Historical Associations efforts to preserve the history of the Jenison area with the purchase of this 1st Annual Collectable!

These would make great gifts for family and friends.

Cost is \$15, plus shipping

Find an order form on the website or call 616-896-1447 for more information)

Volunteer Opportunities!!

Museum Cleaning: This is a big job, as you can well imagine, that needs constant attention in order to have the museum look it's best during the open houses. Contact any board member if you can lend a few hours.

Tour Guides: The school tours are a great way of teaching the children about our history and is such a rewarding experience. You won't regret being a part of this experience for our local children. Joyce

Klawiter would love to hear from you.

Community Displays: An initiative is to get some displays out into the community, possible to local banks, schools and businesses. What better way to get awareness out into the community than to bring the museum to them. Grayce Lancaster is heading up this project. She would welcome any help you might be able to offer from finding the locations to

picking display material and setting up the displays.

And the list goes on... Monthly Open Houses, Theme's for Open Houses, Inventory, Museum Maintenance, board trustee.

You can come to a monthly meeting or reach out to any board member if you would like to volunteer in any particular area.

Restorations Needed

The picture shown is but one of the pictures that JHA is looking to restore. This picture is of President Garfield and his family. He came to our area to visit his brother, Thomas, who lived in Jamestown, one account says his last visit was 3 years before he was assassination in 1881. This picture of Garfield and his family, is showing signs of deterioration which can still be stopped, but the price is upwards of \$600 for just this one picture.



JHA is starting a drive to build a restoration fund with the donations earmarked for just such projects. Would you be willing to donate to help restore this picture and others in need of repair?

Come to the next open house to learn more, or you can send your donation to PO Box 664, Jenison MI 49429 and mark it for the Restoration Fund.

For Sale at the Museum

Jenison Museum Note Pads	\$ 1.50
Stationary with Envelopes	\$ 2.00
Book: Bend in the River	\$10.00
Book: At the Bend	\$ 4.00
Mill Print (unframed)	\$10.00
Jenison at the Bend CD	\$10.00
Historical Prints:	
Large	\$10.00
Small	\$ 7.50

Available during any open house, or call the Museum at 457-4398

JHA TRUSTEE'S

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457-3708

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Ken Williams (14)
772-6523

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896-1447

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Bev Potter (13)
308-4490

Tours/Co-Archivist

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457-9018

Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (14)
457-9343

Maintenance/Historian

Mike Timmer (13)
531-1218

Trustee

Yvonne Williams (14)
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Tim Boelema
669-5079
Linda Droog
457-3016

Township Rep

Ron Villerius

(##) = year of re-election to the board

Contact Information: Members may contact the board at the above phone numbers or leave a message at 457-4398 or info@jenisonhistory.org

Historical Association of Michigan

Find us on the registry at

www.hsmichigan.org



Jenison Historical Association
PO Box 664
Jenison, MI 49429

2013 Meeting Schedule

Thursday, July 18, 2013 - Georgetown Library

Thursday, August 15 - Georgetown Library

Thursday, September 19, Georgetown Library

Thursday, October 17, Georgetown Library

Thursday, November 21 - Georgetown Library

No Meeting in December, 2013

All meetings begin at 6:45 PM unless noted

2013 Museum Open House Schedule

July 20, 2013 2:30-4 PM

September 21 2013 2-4 PM

October 19, 2013 2-4 PM

December 7, 2013 1-4 PM 2013 Holiday Open House

ALSO: 1st Tuesday of the month April thru November -
10 AM - Noon

Special Group Tours available upon request.

Call to volunteer your time at the open houses