



Jenison Historical Association Footnotes

Jenison Historical Association
Box 664—28 Port Sheldon
Jenison, Michigan 49429



February 2009



Board Members

Chairman

Liz Timmer (10)

Vice Chairman/Co-Historian

Ken Williams (11)

Twp. Rep / Treasurer

Dan Carlton

Secretary

Nellie DeLaat (10)

Trustee/Tours, Co-Archivist

Joyce Klawiter (09)

Trustee/ Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (11)

Trustee/Editor

Ruth Lowing (11)

Trustee / Displays/Curator

Grayce Lancaster (09)

Maintenance/Co-Historian

Mike Timmer (10)

Trustee

Beverly Potter (10)

Trustee

Anne Foote (11)

(##) = year this position will be re-elected



Historical Association of Michigan

Find us on the registry of the Historical Society of Michigan:

www.hsmichigan.org



Newsletter Notice

If anyone would like to receive this newsletter electronically, we have an email option.

Please contact Ruth Lowing at rlowing@aol.com or call 616-662-4137 to e-subscribe

From the Archives

We are adding a new feature to the newsletter beginning this month. Initially, these articles will be from the files of Virginia Timmer, however if you have a topic you would like to contribute, please contact Ruth Lowing. Virginia has kept detailed diaries of her research and contacts over the years, and these are her stories...

History of Georgetown & Jenison Historical Groups & Saving the Tiffany House

First meeting of the Georgetown Historical Society in Sept., 1966. Last meeting Sept. 19, 1967

Those appointed to the group by the Georgetown Township board meeting of October 10, 1966: for three years: Mrs. Ray (Joan) Mc Clow and Mrs. Douglas (Dorothy) Jenison. For two years : Miss Wanda Alward (later Mrs. Michael Mudget). For one year: Joseph Carlson and Mrs. Burton (Virginia) Timmer

Officers were never chosen. The group met about nine times--the last meeting being in September, 1967.

We had a guest speaker from the Michigan Historical Commission (or Society), we worked on a constitution and collected a number of historical items with the help of Georgetown's first librarian, Barbara Roberts, who also wrote for the *Grandville Star* newspaper.

Barbara Roberts, as librarian had considerable call for articles on local history which indicated a need for an available historical collection.

The star printed old pictures and numerous articles through the efforts of Mrs. Roberts whose husband was a descendant of the old Roberts family from Riverbend.

When Mrs. Roberts left as librarian in April of 1968, she gave the articles she had collected to Virginia Timmer for safe keeping and these are

now at the Jenison museum.

Jenison Historical Association (Save-The-Tiffany House Committee)

The township board motion that led to saving the Tiffany House (May 10,1971).

Grand Valley Shoppers' Guide, August 25, 1971 asking for citizens to serve on a committee to save what was called the "Tiffany House"--a name that evolved from the last owners, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Tiffany.

The list of citizens who came forward were: Yvonne Beurkens, Mrs. Virginia Timmer, Mrs. Arlene Lowery, Mrs. Betty Groendyke, Mrs. Paul Roney, Mrs. David Mc Kenzie, Mrs. Eva Sayen, Mr. And Mrs. John De Winter. Gerald Scholma

was the township representative and was our first chairman.

House used as a district office by the state highway department. It was a 3-1/2 year effort to save the house.

One of the first things we did was have it designated a state historical site. Later I worked for a year with Willard Wichers of Holland, who was a member of the Historical Society of Michigan, to compose a text for the state historical marker. Dedicated on November 4, 1978

"..first thing we did was have it [Tiffany House] designated a State Historical Site."

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From the Archives (can't)

(Continued from page 1)

In 1972, we were informed that the final decision about the house would have to come from the federal government. A state highway department official informed the township and historians that he could not, in good conscience, recommend the house remain on its present site. Reasons were safety factors (a car might run off the on ramp and hit the house. We felt it would be in greater danger of being hit if they moved it where they planned to), drainage (there was a large ditch behind the house. We suggested they tile it), federal requirement of 50 feet from the edge of the on-ramp (it was 46 feet), and aesthetic values. (we felt it looked best if kept on its site).

We had two alternatives: move the house or it would be torn down.

Senator Gary Byker was successful in getting the highway to agree to pay to move the house.

In March of 1974, the Township and D.S.H. signed a contract that the house would be moved with a completion date of May 1, 1974.

A month after the signing of the contract (April, 1974) S.E. Solomon and Sons notified the D.S.H. that they owned the house--not the D.S.H.

The D.S.H. regained ownership of the house in August, 1974. I know the story of how this came to pass but it was told to me in confidence.

No bids were received the first time when bids were opened in September, 1974. The second time around, the lowest bid was \$49,000. (the Tiffany's received \$20,000 for the house).

On September, 1974, we had ground breaking ceremonies at the tiffany house when we thought the house would be moved. We still have the gold-painted shovels in the Jenison Museum.

Due to the high cost to move the house, two highway officials were put in charge

of ironing out the situation and they decided they could see no reason for the house to be moved and would attempt to secure federal approval to leave the house on its present site. They were successful in getting the federal approval. They would tile the ditch and cover it over, move the chain link fence to go behind the house instead of through the middle of it, and leave the house where it is.

When these officials returned to Lansing, in November of 1974, their plans were turned down by Mr. Woodford, Highway Director.

The township made some monetary concessions so that in December of 1974, the D.S.H. recommended that a bid of \$36,675 be accepted to move the house.

On Dec. 11, 1974, the Ford Freeway opened with ceremonies at 11am. I talked to Sen. Gary Byker at that time,

"It was February 27, 1975, Mr Woodford sent a one sentence letter..."

and he still felt the highway would move the house.

On Dec. 14, 1974, I wrote a detailed letter to E.V. Erickson, State Highway Chairman, outlining our effort to save the house. He asked John P. Woodford, Highway Director, to answer, which he did on January 2, 1975. He said they planned to proceed to move the house as planned.

During this time, the bicentennial was approaching, we had a bicentennial committee and a river project, the Grandville and Jenison Historical groups were working on a display in the G.R. Public Museum. History was practically consuming us!!

I reported on our problems with moving/not moving the Tiffany House at the KCCHP meeting of January 27, 1975.

Barbara Roelofs and W.D. Frankforter said they would contact the governor's office and put some political pressure on. They called me several times for information. One night, Mr. Frankforter called me at 10pm while he was composing a letter to Jerry Roe, Pres. of the Historical Association of Michigan and head of the Republican Party in Michigan. Mr. Roe needed a letter from Mr. Frankforter as he heard the highway hadn't moved on the Tiffany House thing. I called Sen. Byker's office and the township who also sent letters. On Feb. 14, I learned that the highway had postponed their meeting until Feb. 26, 1975. They asked Mr. Roe to plead our cause at that time.

Before this time, I learned that E.V. Erickson had an interest in history and decided he was the one I was going to write to make what we called a last ditch effort. I called the Save-The-Tiffany-House Committee and they were behind me.

After receiving my letter, Mr. Erickson called. He thought what we wanted was to have the house moved. I said, "no that's what they're telling us we want." We found out later that our wishes had stopped at the desk of Highway Director, John Woodford because he did not want the house to stay there.

It was at the Feb. 26, 1975 meeting that the State Highway Commission voted to leave the house on its site. It was W.D. Frankforter who called me with the good news at 11:30am and I made at least thirty calls to spread the word.

On February 27, 1975, Mr. Woodford sent a one-sentence letter to let us know the house would stay in place.

This effort involved as many as 70 people including 16 different highway officials. We had over fifty articles--mostly in the *Grand Valley Shopper* (now the *Grand Valley Advance*) done by Marian Stevens, and some in *The Grand Rapids Press*.

Meeting Minutes – January 15, 2009

Submitted by Liz Timmer

Present: Ken Williams, Mike Timmer, Ruth Lowing, Virginia Timmer, Joyce Klawitter, Yvonne Williams, Liz Timmer

Association business

Review minutes: October meeting date corrected. Approved with correction.

Treasurer's Report: Approved as written.

Webpage: No report at this time.

2009 Meeting Schedule Locations: March, April & May meetings will be held at Rosewood Reformed Church. Ken will make arrangements.

2009 Open House Themes:

- "Goose Egg Lady" – Her name is Diane Brower. Joyce will contact her and confirm date.
- Tornado Display – Ken will confirm with April 16 presentation and schedule youth building at church. He will also check about having a display at the April 18 open house.

The October 17 Open House will be just about mucking – "Mucking Around"

2009 Goals

- Revise/update Bylaws: Liz will work on this. Add position of Promotions Director
- Recruit new members:
 - o membership information will be given out in the kitchen during open houses after folks have seen the house
 - o Grayce will be asked to contact the Advance about running an article recruiting new members
 - o Liz will contact the Hudsonville Fair about have a table there in August

- Make contact with area businesses
 - o Jenison Chamber of Commerce – check and see if there is one
 - o Check with Jenison Public Schools about using signs
 - o Revise newsletter format and expand distribution via email to anyone indicating interest: The new format which will include a story from our history, will begin with the February issue. Mike will send Ruth a story. Liz will revise guest book sheets to include email addresses if folks want to receive newsletter via email.

Invite Township board to hold meeting at house and tour it: No report due to Dan's absence.

Museum business

Maintenance Report: Mike distributed report. He replaced 3 of the 5 security light bulbs. He will continue to work on getting final quotes for water-proofing basement for Dan

January Open House: Joyce reported that we had 32 guests.

Other Business

Maggie Smedley donated some documents: Annual report from Jenison Christian Reformed Church, 1941 and newspaper on the Dionne Quintuplets.

Mike researched and found that the motor in the basement was from a gasoline powered washing machine.

Treasurers Report – January 2009

Submitted by D. Carlton

Cash on Hand	
Retained Earnings 2008	\$ 2,381.28
	\$ -
As of 12/31/08	\$ 2,381.28
Total Income 2009	\$ 314.00
Total Expenses 2009	\$ -
Total Equity	\$ 2,695.28
Receivables- Unpaid Dues	\$ (160.00)
Total Liabilities	\$ 60.00
Cash on Hand	\$ 2,595.28

Income:	Jan 31, 2009	Year to date 09
Books	3.00	3.00
Donations	14.00	14.00
Memorials	0.00	0.00
Dues	295.00	295.00
Mill Print& Photos	0.00	0.00
Stationery	2.00	2.00
Sub Total	\$314.00	\$314.00
Interest	0.00	0.00
Total Income	\$314.00	\$314.00

Expenses:	Jan 31, 2009	Year to date 09
Equipment Rental	0.00	0.00
Dues & Subscrip- Fees	0.00	0.00
Postage	0.00	0.00
Repairs/Security	\$ -	0.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	0.00
Supplies	0.00	0.00
Insurance	0.00	0.00
Total Expenses	\$0.00	\$0.00
Due Grandville for books		\$ 60.00



Volunteer Opportunities!!

Museum Cleaning: A cleaning schedule is being developed. 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 is such a rewarding experience. You won't regret being a part of this experi-

ence 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, possibly 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.

2009 Meeting Schedule

- Thursday, February 19 – —Georgetown Library
- Thursday, March 19 – ——Rosewood Ref. Church
- Thursday, April 16 ———Rosewood Ref. Church
- Thursday, May 21 – ———Rosewood Ref. Church
- Thursday, June 18 ———Georgetown Library
- Thursday, July 16 ———Georgetown Library
- Thursday, August 20 ———Georgetown Library
- Thursday, September 17 —Georgetown Library
- Thursday, October 16 ——Georgetown Library
- Thursday, November 19 – -Georgetown Library
- No meeting in December, 2009

Note: Rosewood Ref. Church is located on the corner of Rosewood and 28th Ave in Jenison.

2009 Museum Open House Schedule and Tentative Themes

- March 21 from 2-4 p.m. – Decorated Goose Egg Display -- Grayce
- April 18 from 2-4 p.m. – 1954 Tornado Display -- Ken
- May 16 from 2-4 p.m. – How does your garden grow? -- Anne
- July 18 from 2-4 p.m. – Voyagers (reenactment) – Grayce/Nellie
- September 19 from 2-4 p.m. – Jenison Transportation Thru the Ages – Mike/Liz
- October 17 from 2-4 p.m. – Muck Farming & Harvesting -- Ken
- December 5 from 1-4 p.m. – Holiday Open House -- Grayce
- January 9, 2010 from 2-4 p.m. – 2nd Holiday Open House



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Jenison Historical Association Mission Statement:

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.

Next Meeting of the Jenison Historical Association

February 19, 2009 6:45 PM

Georgetown Public Library

General Public Welcome