

Jenison Historical Association

# JENISON HISTORY

February/March 2012

Issue No.: 2012-2

[www.jenisonhistory.org](http://www.jenisonhistory.org)

JENISON HISTORICAL  
ASSOCIATION  
PO Box 664  
Jenison, Michigan 49429  
TELEPHONE  
(616) 457-4398

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.

## The Grand River Series

Our first three Open Houses of 2012, we have planned to explore the river that sustained us and helped establish Georgetown.

Join us in this series as we explore the History of this 'Grand' river, the Crossings where we met our neighbors on the other side and the Riverboats.

History of the Grand - March 10, 2012  
Crossing the Grand, April 14, 2012  
Riverboats of the Grand, May 12, 2012  
2-4 PM

We will culminate the series with our 3rd Annual Riverboat tour on the Grand Lady. Tickets will be available starting at the March Open house

Donations are appreciated to help maintain the Tiffany House Museum, Jenison



1888 Valley City Riverboat



## From the Archives

If you have a topic you would like to contribute (your family stories, etc.) please contact the editor, we would love to include your story.

### FIRST CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

written by Virginia Timmer

**[Editors Note:** Jenison is about to lose one of its grand old buildings. This month we take a look back at the history of First Church.]

First church in the Jenison area was the First Jenison Christian Reformed Church which was organized July 18, 1875 with a membership of 56 which included confessing members, baptized adults and baptized children. At that time, Jenison was a wilderness.

Before the Jenison church was organized, many of the Dutch immigrants walked nine miles to Spring Street Christian Reformed Church on Commerce Street in Grand Rapids. That was in 1857.

As their number increased, they found it more expedient to gather at school house or homes, from homes to school house and from school house to the upper rooms of the Jenison General Store. They listened to sermons read by one of their members until the years 1872-1873 when they met in the home of Sietse Bos. They expressed a desire to be organized as a church.

The "De wachter" of August 19, 1875 had an official report stating that on July 18th, a new Christian Reformed Church was organized in Jenisonville by rev. K. Vanden Bosch of Grand Haven.

The first decade was a period of struggle. The land was not easily cleared of the pine stumps and oak shrubs. In the spring there was excess surface water, yet to get a good well was costly. By now Jenison consisted of two churches, a large feed mill, a hotel, a saloon, a foundry, about thirty dwellings, a blacksmith shop, a creamery, two general stores, and the

Chicago and Western Michigan railroad depot, but service was inadequate to permit working in Grand Rapids.

The Jenison brothers had donated some ground at the "fork" in the road and some building material. The consistory purchased some additional space. Much labor was donated. Towards the end of 1876, eighteen months after organization, the first little Jenison church was completed. The building was 40 x 32 feet with a seating capacity of 150. A rail fence protected the house of worship from roving cattle.

In the summer of 1885, a parsonage was built. By now the congregation had grown to fifty-four families. The church and parsonage were debt free. In August 1886, rev. T.M. Vanden Bosch accepted a call to be their pastor. The pastor's salary was according to the times. A good milk cow supplied the family with milk and butter, chickens supplied the eggs and a garden produced the vegetables. Farmers brought other supplies. A good horse enabled the reverend to make pastoral calls. He stayed for twenty-two months.

During Rev. Vanden Bosch's stay, the church became too small and was lengthened twenty-four feet. Stables were built to accommodate 40 horses. Even though the church was without a pastor for five years, an East wing was added to the church, not because it was too small, but because the west winds were too strong.

In 1909, the congregation decided to purchase new pews, giving the old ones to the Bauer church, which organized in 1902. The following year, 1910, they purchased a new pipe organ to be pumped by hand. It was during this time that people were coming across the Grand River via the Jenison ferry.

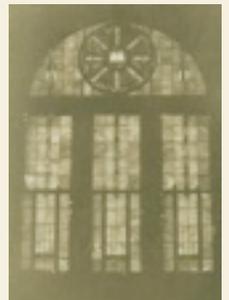
In January of 1915, a Bell Telephone

was installed in the parsonage and the first english services were started--two Sunday evenings per month, to begin in May, 1915. The following year the congregation decided to build a basement under the church; to install new furnaces and electric lights in the church and parsonage.

From 1921 to 1927, the congregation grew from ninety-six families to one hundred and nineteen families.

On May 31st, 1929; it was decided to have church bulletins. On March 10, 1930, the Hanley Methodist Church was purchased and mission work began. That same year on Sept. 15, a christian school started in the basement rooms of the church.

At the close of 1937, the congregation had grown to 175 families for a total of 793. It was decided, in 1937, to rebuild and enlarge the church. This was accomplished by the following year.



The next few years saw a drainage system installed to off-set the danger of water in the basement, the church yard was graveled and graded, and in the summer of 1947, street lights were installed in Jenison. The following year a new three manual Schantz organ was installed to replace the one used for almost thirty years.

In 1975, First Jenison Christian Reformed Church marked 100 years. Just a month before, they had moved into a new house of worship on 10th Avenue and Cottonwood.



Before the 1938 Expansion



Looking Northwest at the Janitors house



After the Expansion



2010

**First Christian Reformed Church**  
thru the years  
(thanks to Mike Timmer for helping with all the pictures)



1940's

Museum Happenings

**February**

Association members have been busy packing up the Holiday decorations for next year and cleaning the museum to get ready for another year. The Museum is beginning to shine. Hope you can come to one of the upcoming events to see the hard work put in by the members to make her shine!

**March**

Begins the series on The Grand River.

**Watch the calendar on the web for other upcoming events.**

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](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org).

**Thank You:**

Also, JHA would like to extend a big thank you to the Four Seasons Garden Club for the beautiful gardens at the Museum in 2011. We look forward to another beautiful year of flowers.

The garden club meets the 3rd Thursday of each month, except January at the Grandville Senior Center at 7 PM.

**Are you a member??**

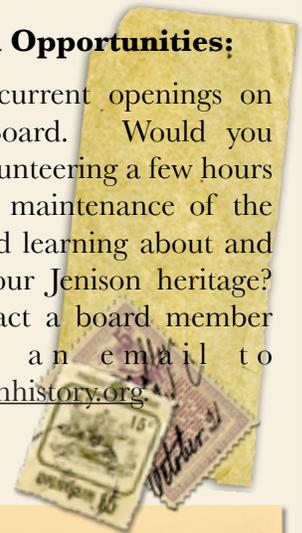
If you are not a dues paying

member, please consider joining to help support the Association. Dues are a bargain at only \$10 per year. Contact the JHA at [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org) or calling the museum

616-457-4398

**JHA Board Opportunities:**

There are current openings on the JHA Board. Would you consider volunteering a few hours a month to maintenance of the museum and learning about and preserving our Jenison heritage? Please contact a board member or send an email to [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org).



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 his 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 for just such projects. Would you be willing to donate to help restore this picture and others in need of repair?

Come to the open house on March 10th 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	\$ 3.00
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

### Chair

Liz Timmer (13)

### Vice Chair/Curator

Ken Williams (14)

### Treasurer/Editor

Ruth Lowing (14)

### Social Secretary

Nellie DeLaat (13)

### Recording Secretary

Bev Potter (13)

### Tours/Co-Archivist

Joyce Klawiter (12)

### Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (14)

### Maintenance/Historian

Mike Timmer (13)

### Trustee

Yvonne Williams (14)

### Township Rep

Del South

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

**Contact Information:** To reach any board member, leave a message at 457-4398 or [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org)

## Historical Association of Michigan

Find us on the registry of the Historical Society of Michigan  
[www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org)

**We are now on Facebook, find us at Jenison History Association and become a friend.**



Jenison Historical Association  
PO Box 664  
Jenison, MI 49429

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### 2012 Meeting Schedule

Thursday, January 19 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, February 16 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, March 15 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, April 19 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, May 17 - Rosewood Ref. Church  
Thursday, June 21 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, July 19 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, August 16 - Rosewood Ref. Church  
Thursday, September 20 - Rosewood Ref. Church  
Thursday, October 18 - Georgetown Library  
Thursday, November 15 - Georgetown Library  
No Meeting in December, 2011

**All meetings begin at 6:45 PM unless noted**

### 2012 Museum Open House Schedule

March 10	2-4 PM	History of the Grand
April 14	2-4 PM	Crossing the Grand
May 12	2-4 PM	History of the Riverboat
June 16	2-4 PM	
July 14	2-4 PM	Riverboat Ride (Tentative)
September 8	2-4 PM	Jenison Public Schools memorabilia/yearbook party
October 13	2-4 PM	
December 8	1-4 PM	Holiday Open House
January 12 2013	2-4 PM	2nd Holiday Open House
1st Tuesday of the month April thru November		
10 AM - Noon		