

Jenison Historical Association

JENISON HISTORY

January 2013

Issue No.: 2013-1

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.

1ST ANNUAL COLLECTABLE SOUVENIR

Get your 1st Annual collectable honoring Jenison History, the Jenison Museum and support future JHA projects!

Cost is \$15 each

Pick up your order at the museum during an open house, call the museum, find an order form on the web site or email me direct (rlosing@aol.com) to work out the best option for you.

These will make great gifts for family and friends!

Yes, these have been quite popular, but we still have some left. Help us to sell out before we order the 2nd annual collectable souvenir of



Holiday Open House - December 2012
These very special members dressed for the occasion!



2012 1st Annual Souvenir Ornament

THE BERGER FAMILY

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 is another from Virginia Timmer's files, written in December 2001. Her Sources: R. Dale Berger Jr.; Herm and Arlene Van Laar; and The Grand Rapids Press of Friday, January 10, 1975 page 10C)

The Berger family came to Jenison in the early 1800's. According to R. Dale Berger, Jr. the family settled in Jenison because members of his grandfather's family all settled here.

Dale, Jr.'s grandfather, William H. Berger, was born 1886 in Jenison in a farmhouse at 8460 Cottonwood. He died on September 23, 1972. His wife, the former Susan Bosworth, born 1890 died in 1957 at the age of 67. Susan's brother was Carl Bosworth of Jenison and her sister was Mrs Clyde Cory of Hudsonville.

William H. and Susan's children were R. Dale Berger, Sr., Ned C. Berger and William C. Berger. After Susan died, William H. lived at the 8662 Cottonwood address with his sister Elizabeth. Some of the Bergers attended the one-room, District #6 school in Jenison located on Cottonwood just off Baldwin, and also

Grandville High School.

Elizabeth Berger died January 18, 1980 at the age of 96. She donated the land at Cottonwood and Bauer to Jenison Schools where the school buses are parked. Another sister, Nellie Berger, married Charles Lowing-- the Lowings being another family who came to Jenison in the early 1800's.

The Bergers were farmers when they first came to Jenison. In 1925, W.H. Berger got into the car business which evolved into what we know today as Berger Chevrolet. His son William C. had a Chevrolet dealership in Greenville, son Ned C. a dealership in Ionia, and son R. Dale, Sr. joined his father in Grand Rapids.

In 1975, R. Dale Berger, Sr., then president of Berger Chevrolet, was one of 60 dealers named TIME Magazine Quality Dealer "for exceptional performance in their dealerships combined with distinguished community service." he became a partner in the dealership in 1944 and received his Chevrolet 25 year plaque in 1969.

Berger was a president of Michigan State Automobile Dealers Association, president of the Greater Grand Rapids New & Used Car Dealers Association,

member of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce, Greater Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce, Grand Rapids Convention Bureau and Grand Rapids Better Business Bureau and received the United Fund Achievement Award. He provided two ambulances to the Kent County Humane Society for its use and automobiles to three schools for driver education.

William H. had three houses along Cottonwood-- the first being at 8460, the second at 8735; and the last at 8662. He owned the gravel pits where Cottonwood joins Filmore, including the Braun farm, and the property east to Bauer Road. Some of the Berger property was sold to Koetje Builders and Koetje decided to call it Berger Estates.

The last house William H. built is at 8662 Cottonwood. At this writing (2001) it is owned by Mr. and Mrs. Jake Bosmeijer. According to an old ledger book, it cost approximately \$40,000 and took one year to build beginning in September, 1947.



THE BERGER FAMILY (CONT)

The house was built by Henry Van Laar who built quality homes. Henry worked for the Bergers when they had a car dealership in the area of Lake Drive and Wealthy in Grand Rapids. Henry's son Herm Van Laar was attending high school at the time and helped weekends and summers.

The house was modeled after a home that Berger liked at 2740 Lake Drive, east of Breton in Grand Rapids. It took longer to

build the house because of the quality and size; also the special finishing and details on the inside. During Construction, W.H. Berger lived in the oldest Berger house at 8460 Cottonwood where he was born. The tennis courts were built for William C. (Bill) Berger who was "quite a tennis player".

During the April 3, 1956 tornado, William H. stood in the living room and watched it go over his land. It took a barn and

did a lot of damage to the tennis courts and cars parked there. There was very little damage to the house--just a few shingles. The former Berger home at 8735 Cottonwood was heavily damaged by the tornado which tore the upper part of the house completely off.

Dale Berger, Jr. said he spent a lot of Christmas's at the 8662 Cottonwood home and remembers the delicious chicken dinners his grandmother cooked.

Sadly missed...

Virginia Y. Timmer (Piers)



Age 84, of Jenison, went home to be with her Lord on Tuesday, November 6, 2012. She was preceded in death by her husband of 50 years, Burton; her sons, Dennis and Douglas. She will be lovingly remembered by her children,

Yvonne (Terry) Hall and Michael (Geri) Timmer of Grandville, Mitchell (Chris) Timmer of Hudsonville; daughters-in-law, Ruth Timmer and Dawn Timmer of Zeeland; 18 grandchildren; 30 great grandchildren; sister, Thelma Veneklasen; brother, Eugene (Marian) Piers; sister-in-law, Wilma Boeve; special life-long friend,

Hester (Harold) Hinken; many nieces and nephews.

What a debt we owe her for saving the house and for all the information (drawers and drawers full) that she saved for all of us to use, many writings in this paper are her works. Now we must to be vigilant in saving these items.

Museum Happenings

October 2012

This month we focused on showing off the newest display with artifacts and photos of the Jenison Mill. This is a permanent display that is housed in the basement area of the museum.



Be sure to come and check it out if you haven't seen it already.

December/January 2012

In November the decorators were very busy 'decking the halls' for our annual Victorian Christmas Open House at the Museum.

The house was decked in all its finery as we welcomed one of our biggest crowds ever to the museum.

We repeated the event one more time in January and had several private tours over the Holidays as family and friends of many local families were in town and wanted to take in the museum while there were here.

Thanks to the many members who took time out of their busy schedules to run all the private tours.

Upcoming Open Houses

You will find the schedule of open houses at the end of this newsletter. We will be finalizing the themes this month, be sure to watch the web site for updates.

Watch the calendar on the web for 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

JHA Board Elections:

There are current openings on the JHA Board and elections will be coming up next month. Please consider joining the board, and/or volunteering a few hours a month to maintenance of the museum and learning about and preserving our Jenison heritage? Please contact a board member by calling the museum and leaving a message or send an email to info@jenisonhistory.org.

Web Site:

We would like to extend apologies if you went to our web site (www.jenisonhistory.org) recently and saw disturbing images. We continue to work to keep the hackers at bay that seem to think our little web site is a good forum for their message. We are trying to monitor it daily.



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

**Coming soon our web Gift Store will be opening soon. Watch the web site.

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)

Tim Boelema (15)

Linda Droog (15)

Township Rep

Ron Villerius

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

Contact Information: To reach any board member, leave a message at 457-4398 or info@jenisonhistory.org

Historical Association of Michigan

Find us on the registry of the Historical Society of Michigan
www.hsmichigan.org

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



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PO Box 664
Jenison, MI 49429

2013 Meeting Schedule

Thursday, January 17 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, February 21 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, March 21 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, April 18 - Georgetown Library
Thursday, May 16 - TBD
Thursday, June 20 - Georgetown Library
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

2012 Museum Open House Schedule

March 16, 2013	2-4 PM
April 20, 2013	2-4 PM
May 18, 2013	2-4 PM
June 15, 2013	2-4 PM
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

Call to volunteer your time at the open houses