

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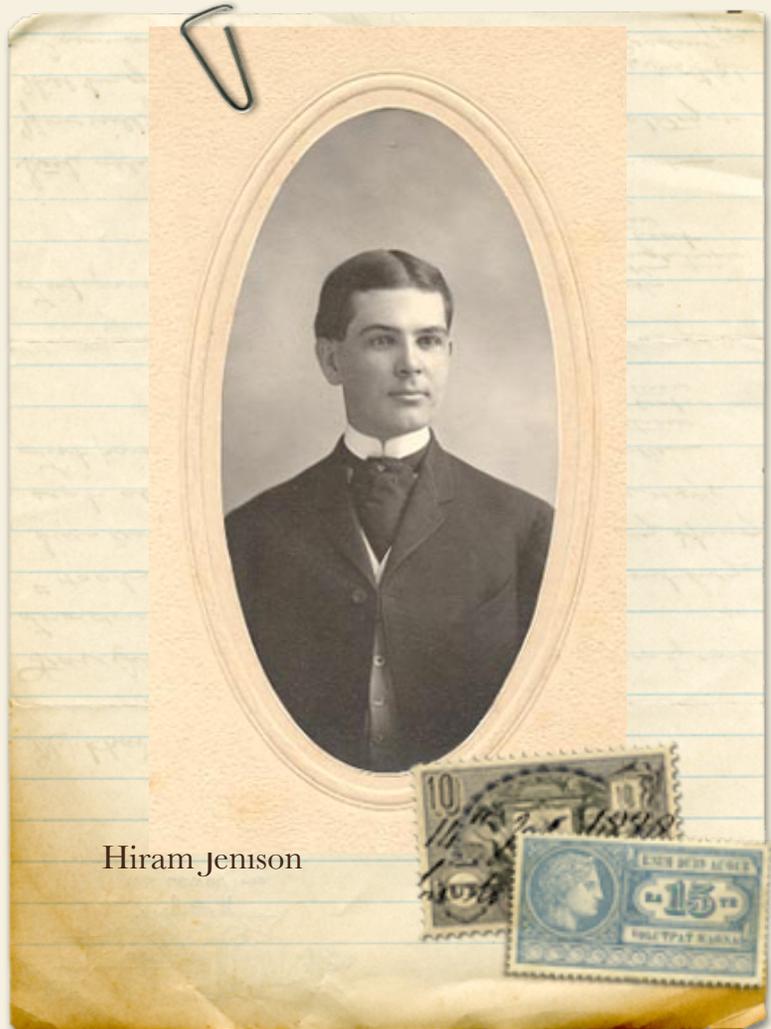
Our mission is to learn about Jenison history, obtain artifacts relating to its history, and maintain the Jenison Historical Museum as a place to share and display our heritage.

HIRAM JENISON

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, in revised 2001.

Hiram Jenison was the oldest son of Lemuel and Sarah (or Sally) Sanderson Jenison. Lemuel and Sarah were married in 1806 (*per email dated 9/18/2012 from Allan Gillbertson recorded in the family bible of Josiah Jenison, son of Abijah Jenison, this date is March 1807*). Hiram's grandparents were Abijah Jenison, born Nov. 19, 1757 (*per above referenced email this should be 1747 not 1757....*), and Mary Robinson. Abijah served in the Revolutionary War in Benedict Arnold's division at the time he attempted to deliver West Point to the British.

Lemuel settled in St. Lawrence County near Canton, New York. He was a highly esteemed citizen and successful businessman. About 1830, Lemuel endorsed a paper of a leading citizen who failed and went away. It took most of Lemuel's property to meet the indebtedness. He had enough left to take his family to Michigan.



Hiram Jenison

HIRAM JENISON (CONT)

Hiram Jenison was born May 11, 1813 at Canton, St. Lawrence County, New York. At the age of majority (21), Hiram came to Ann Arbor, Michigan to consult with the husband of Lemuel's sister, Polly (Mrs. Daniel Brown) to advise and arrange for purchase of a large tract of pine land on the Grand River. This area was called El Dorado, the land of promise, and hope, the territory of Michigan. This land was not in the union yet and had a population of only 90,000 people.

Hiram's parents Lemuel and Sarah along with twins Lucius and Luman and four daughters (one daughter died in New York State) arrived soon after. The family joined the son (Hiram) who had blazed the way. Hiram and Luman were the businessmen but Lucius preferred the farm although he did help in the brother's enterprises.

In 1835 Nathaniel Brown and Roswell Britton built a saw mill on Buck Creek, and Lemuel Jenison and son, Hiram, contracted to stock it with logs and to operate it. In this mill was cut the lumber that made up the first cargo of lumber that entered the city of Chicago in 1835.

Lucius and Luman, Hiram's twin brothers were twelve years old at the time and did the work around

home, while their father and Hiram were engaged at the mill or in the woods.

Due to the untimely death of the father, Lemuel, on September 24, 1837 after being struck by a falling tree, the care of the family fell on the shoulders of Hiram and twins, Luman and Lucius who were ten years younger. Sarah Jenison died in 1840.

In 1837, Hiram Jenison, on behalf of himself and his younger brothers, purchased a tract of 1,600 acres of white pine-timbered land of the Michigan Lumber Company of Chicago paying \$1.50 an acre. In a small way the Jenison brothers began lumbering on their own account, Hiram at the head of the enterprise and general manager by reason of his seniority, and Luman and Lucius as operators. The land at that time was considered worthless for settlement and was sold in large tracts for the pine that was on it. Lumbering was the first occupation of the township.

On October 4, 1838, Hiram married Mary Beardsley who was born June 26, 1819. They had nine children: George, Francis (Frank) A., Mary E., Anson L., Sarah C., Delia A., Hiram Eugene, Willis O. (Willie), and Douglas Minet (Doug). (The name Minet stems from the

brother of Lemuel Jenison, Minet, who at the age of 14 went with Lemuel and his new wife to pioneer in St. Lawrence County.) Bursley School is named after Beardsley.

Georgetown was organized as a township by the State Legislature in 1839, and at that time was made up of Jamestown, Georgetown, Zeeland and Blendon, but the only settlers were in Georgetown.

In April of 1840, seven men met at Jenison and held the first township meeting. Hiram Jenison was elected Supervisor, an office he held from 1840-45 and 1848-49. He was a State Representative for Ottawa County in 1853-54. Hiram was delegate from Ottawa County to the Constitutional Convention of 1876. He was a Democrat. The Jenison's donated property for schools, churches, roads and the railroad.

In 1864 Hiram and brothers built a new grist mill on the site of one of their saw mills. Later, they built the side wheeler L & L Jenison. They called the town Jenisonville which they platted in 1885 on the 50th anniversary of their coming to the Grand River



HIRAM JENISON (CONT')

Valley. In 1872, they built the L & L Jenison Store--the same year the railroad came through directly behind the store.

Douglas was the last Jenison to live in the big square house.

Hiram left everything to the twins, Lucius and Luman. He died in 1889, ten years before the twins. Lucius and Luman left identical wills leaving "all personal farm property, stock, horses, cattle, tools, implements of husbandry, machinery and fixtures on or belonging to the old homestead farm, I give devise and bequeath to Douglas M. Jenison and Hiram Eugene Jenison jointly, and to their respective heirs and assigns forever. And all the rest...of my said estate of every kind and nature ...I give devise and bequeath to Mrs. Bessie Husband Hanchett and Mrs. Margaret J. Husband." Bessie Husband had

married Benjamin S. Hanchett on April 19, 1896. Ben's mother was Betsey Jenison the youngest child of Lemuel and Sarah and sister of Hiram, Luman and Lucius.

Quite often when someone in the Jenison family was married, or someone passed away, the services were held in the home of Hiram Jenison, also later when Douglas Minet occupied the house. Lucius Jenison's funeral was held from the residence of his nephew, Douglas Jenison, according to newspaper accounts.

Although the date Hiram Jenison built his home is unknown, it is illustrated in the 1876 Ottawa County Atlas. One account states that all Hiram's children were born in the house--the first being born in 1840, the last 1861. The house stands at 930 Port Sheldon Road in Jenison, Georgetown Township, Ottawa

County. After the war years, the house was divided into apartments and rented out. Standing empty for many years, the Millers purchased the house in 1994. The Millers have consulted with the Jenison family who remember how it was and have tried to restore its original splendor. They have added their own personal touches in keeping with the time period. The garage and exercise room were added by the Millers.



2012 1st Annual Souvenir
Still Available

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.

March 2013

This month the open house 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.

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

April 2013

In April our focus is on the families along Port Sheldon Road West; such as Jenison's and Beardsley's.

May 2013

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

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June 2013

June will bring us to the families along the Grand River; such as, Lowing, Haire, Boynton and Wallin.

July 2013

We will take our ride on the Grand Lady Riverboat. Tickets will be available in May

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 area 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:

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

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457-3708

Vice Chair/Curator

Ken Williams (14)
772-6523

Treasurer/Editor

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Recording Secretary

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Tours/Co-Archivist

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457-9018

Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (14)
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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, 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

2013 Museum Open House Schedule

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