



Jenison Historical Association Footnotes

Jenison Historical Association
Box 664—28 Port Sheldon; Jenison, Michigan 49429
www.jenisonhistory.org

January 2010

From the Archives

These articles are from the files of Virginia Timmer, however if you have a topic you would like to contribute (your family stories, etc.), please contact Ruth Lowing. Virginia has kept detailed diaries of her research and contacts over the years, and these are her stories...

Board Members

Chairman

Liz Timmer (10)

Vice Chairman/Co-Historian

Ken Williams (11)

Treasurer/Editor

Ruth Lowing (11)

Secretary

Nellie DeLaat (10)

Trustee/Tours, Co-Archivist

Joyce Klawiter (09)

Trustee/ Co-Archivist

Barb Semeyn (11)

Trustee / Displays/Curator

Grayce Lancaster (09)

Maintenance/Co-Historian

Mike Timmer (10)

Trustee

Beverly Potter (10)

Trustee

Anne Foote (11)

Township Rep

Del South

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

Contact Information:

To reach any board member, leave a message at 457-4398



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 616-896-1447 to e-subscribe

STORY OF BLISSVELDT FARM

On what is now Port Sheldon Road was the Blissveldt farm. Nelson Bliss married Altha Jenison, sister of Hiram and the twins, Lucius and Luman of the pioneer family who settled in Jenison. The name Blissveldt is after Nelson Bliss and Veldt is the Dutch word for farm.

Ben and Bessie Husband Hanchett became owners around 1910. Ben's mother was Betsey Jenison Hanchett, a sister of Altha Jenison Bliss. The 1915 Hanchett movie entitled "Blissveldt Romance" starts at the farm and shows the Interurban passenger depot. It is available on video from the Georgetown Library.

Prize Holstein cattle and horses were of the best breed and were recognized throughout the state. Persons throughout the area could board the interurban. It stopped behind the big barn and milk house. Ben Hanchett loved being at his farm and often stayed in quarters behind the old farmhouse. If wife Bessie came along, they might stay in the cottage at 424 Port Sheldon on Rush Creek that was part of the farm property as was the house at 300 Port Sheldon which was a tenant house. In 1935, two years after Ben

Hanchett's death, an auction sale was held and much of the farm property and cattle were sold. In 1940, the property reverted back to Mrs. Bessie Hanchett. From then on, the farm had a series of superintendents who were prominent in the life of the Jenison community.

After Bessie Hanchett's death in 1960, the farm was purchased by John and Elizabeth Huizenga who employed three full-time hands.

About 1930, Clarence Vredeveld learned Hanchett needed help. There was an opening in the dairy at Blissveldt Farm, so he worked there 3-1/2 years.

The daily schedule started at 4am. They milked 6-7:30am and 4:30-6pm, and if a third were necessary that was at noon. They milked an average of 45-50 milking cows and also had to tend to young stock and heifers.

The milk was loaded on a milk wagon and another fellow drove the truck every morning at 6am. Most of their milk went to Blodgett Hospital and to East Grand

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* *Check our our new web site at www.jenisonhistory.org*

* *Dues Reminder...your 2010 dues are due this month, don't forget!!*

From the Archives (can't)

(Continued from page 1)

Rapids people. It was Grade A raw milk. There was no pasteurizing in those days. Milk had to be delivered every day--7 days a week.

They went home for breakfast about 7:30am, then returned to do the chores and washing of the milking equipment until about 11:30, they had a 2-1/2 hour noon. They got done about 6pm. This was 7 days a week although Sundays they just did necessary chores, so had a few more hours off on Sunday and a whole Sunday off every 2-3 weeks.

The milk was separated into 3%, 4%, or 5% butterfat. It went through a separator. Some was sold as cream or whipping cream. There was a flowing well that cooled the milk as there was no refrigeration, but they had ice they would throw into the flowing well trough to help keep it cold. When the Interurban ran behind the barn, it would pick up some of the milk.

People would get on the Interurban to ride out to Blissveldt farm--mostly

on Sundays and holidays--just to look, to buy or to sell. There were a lot of visitors. They would take the next Interurban back home.

They were very much government inspected. They came very often unannounced. If they found out things weren't clean, you had to clean it or lose your license. They would come once a day, once a week or once in 6 weeks.

All the utensils were put in a steamer for 20 minutes. By the time I started working there, we had 4 milking machines that would milk 2 cows each at once. Then we had to hand strip the rest of the milk from the cows.

Sometimes a cow would give us trouble. They would start kicking, sometimes kicking the milking machine away or the can of milk. We had one cow we had to tie up every time we milked her. If a stranger came into the barn, the cows would give us trouble. We had to get to know the cows personally. Each cow was fed a certain amount of grain--a mixture of grains, some hay and so forth. We

had very little trouble with diseases because of the regular inspections. A cow would be removed immediately if something was wrong.

The farmhouse was across the road from the big cow barn. Behind the house were other barns and living quarters. There were also living quarters in the big barn across from the farmhouse. Mr. John J. Piers took care of all the office work. He was bookkeeper, treasurer--everything--and took care of all the office work from his office at one end of the L & L Jenison store.

Other big farms in the area were Cedar Crest, Wallinwood and Closterhouse.

Postscripts: The big Blissveldt barn was burned down on Sept. 8, 1973. The farmhouse across Port Sheldon and the rest of the barns were gone sometime after that. The new Bliss Street off Port Sheldon was named after Blissveldt Farm.

By Virginia Timmer



A scene from "The Blissveldt Romance", a melodrama filmed and set in Grand Rapids in the early 1900's.

Meeting Minutes— November 19, 2010

Submitted by **Nellie DeLaat**

Present: Nellie DeLaat, Grayce Lancaster, Ruth Lowing, Del South, Yvonne Williams, Ken Williams, Mike Timmer

Guests: Kelly & Tim Boelema

Association business

Review October minutes: Motion made to accept minutes as written by Ruth. Seconded by Nellie. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Motion made to accept treasurer’s report as written by Grayce. Seconded by Ken. Motion passed.

Webpage update: Ruth reported that the new webpage is “live”. Brower address is: www.jenisonhistory.org

Michigan Historical Association Membership: Funds were approved to continue this membership.

Museum business

Maintenance Report: Mike checked the house after the last big rain. Basement was dry but there was a waterfall running down the wall into the drain system in the SE corner. He found a small leak in the attic by the smaller NW chimney. He also fixed the furnace which was not work-

ing properly. There is also a broken light fixture outside. Mike is still checking on the sprinkler system at the Museum.

Before & After Display: Mike needs ply wood to complete the display. He requested \$75 to cover this cost. Motion made by Ken to approve this request; seconded by Grayce. Motion passed.

Weatherwax Family: Joseph Weatherwax is on the list for the Small Pox Cemetery. Ken is checking on the Weatherwax family. He talked to someone who has books he could read.

Holiday Open House: Still decorating. Grayce contacted the Advance and GR Press. Shari Miller will open the Hiram Jenison House. Three people are needed for the Hiram Jenison house. Grayce changed the name tags for the Holiday Open House.

Other business

Ken showed his slide presentation. It was very enjoyable.

2010 Meeting Schedule

- Thursday, January 21 – Georgetown Library
- Thursday, February 18—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, March 18—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, April 15—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, May 20—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, June 17—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, July 15—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, August 19—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, September 16 - Georgetown Library
- Thursday, October 21—Georgetown Library
- Thursday, November 18 0 Georgetown Library

No meeting in December, 2010

All meetings start at 6:45 PM unless noted.

2010 Museum Open House Schedule and Themes

March 20, 2010	2-4 PM	Blissveldt Romance
April 17, 2010	2-4 PM	Cedar Crest Dairy
May 15, 2010	2-4 PM	Jenison Then and Now
July 17, 2010	2-4 PM	Haire Landing/Cemetery
September 18, 2010	2-4 PM	Coffee at Tiffany's
October 16, 2010	2-4 PM	From Trees to Subdivisions
December 4, 2010	1-4 PM	Holiday Open House

A Look Back at Christmas 2009 Open House



Clockwise from top right: One of the many pretty ornaments; Children's Tree (Turret Bedroom); Gingerbread ornament; Snow Tree (Margaret Husbands Bedroom); Dining room Display; Nellie serving cookies and Hot Cider.



Treasurers Report –

Submitted by R. Lowing



Cash on Hand	
Retained Earnings 2008	\$ 2,381.28
wrote off unpaid dues	\$ (70.00)
As of 12/31/08	\$ 2,311.28
Total Income 2009	\$ 1,134.45
Total Expenses 2009	\$ (492.84)
Total Equity	\$ 2,952.89
Receivables- Unpaid Dues	\$ (40.00)
Total Liabilities	\$ 40.00
Cash on Hand	\$ 2,952.89

Income:	11/3/09 thru 12/31/09	Year to date 09
Books	0.00	35.00
Donations	96.00	579.75
Memorials	0.00	0.00
Dues	130.00	480.00
Mill Print & Photos	0.00	10.00
Stationery	0.00	26.50
Sub Total	\$226.00	\$1,131.25
Interest	0.11	3.20
Total Income	\$226.11	\$1,134.45

Expenses:	11/3/09 thru 12/31/09	Year to date 09
Equipment Rental	0.00	0.00
Dues & Subscriptions	35.00	(35.00)
Fees	0.00	(40.00)
Postage	0.00	0.00
Repairs/Security	\$ -	(47.47)
Miscellaneous	0.00	(119.59)
Technology	0.00	(78.99)
Supplies	0.00	(51.79)
Insurance	0.00	(120.00)
Total Expenses	\$35.00	(\$492.84)
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.

March Open HOuse

Blissveldt Romance

Saturday, March 20

2-4 PM

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

For Sale at the Museum:

'Bend in the River' book

Mill Prints and stationary

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

Please take a few moments to
check out our new Web site at

www.jenisonhistory.org

Content ideas can be sent to
info@jenisonhistory.org



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

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

January 21, 2010 6:45 PM

Georgetown Public Library

Members Encouraged and General Public Welcome