



~ Memories ~

Newsletter of the Jenison Historical
Association & Museum

jenisonhistory.org

28 Port Sheldon, Jenison, Michigan
49429

JHA Board Members

Chair - Liz Timmer [2019] 457-3708

Curator/Tours - Ken Williams [2020] 772-6523

Treasurer - Ruth Lowing [2020] 540-4709

Social Secretary - Nellie DeLaat [2019]
457-1193

Recording Secretary - Linda Droog [2021]
457-3016

Archivist - Barb Semeyn [2020] 457-9343

Maintenance/Historian - Mike Timmer [2019]
531-1218

Trustees =
Yvonne Williams [2020] 772-6523

Gene Kort [2019] 534-6769

Township Rep - Becky Steele

Editor - Ronnie Aungst [] 780-1056

Contact Information

Museum phone: 457-4398 to leave a message

Email: info@jenisonhistory.org

Facebook: Jenison History Association

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Looking back at 2018 we can report a very successful year. We had over 900 visitors to the Museum and Special Events. Our December Christmas Open House was special as the **West Michigan Community Chorale** [pictured below] entertained with Christmas songs.

Additionally, the failing furnace was replaced and air conditioning was added which will help to preserve our artifacts by regulating the temperature in the building. Several other issues were addressed along with general upkeep. All in all, a great year.

Our plans for 2019 have been made. Check out the Open House themes, the Special Events and consider volunteering with us this year. Come to any Open House or Meeting — there's always a place for you.



- From our Chairperson -

Dear JHA Members and Community Members,

I'm so glad you are interested in the Jenison Historical Association (JHA). I want to personally invite you to join us at our monthly meetings in 2019. All meetings start at 6:45 p.m. and are held at the Georgetown Library. Below are the dates for the meetings (they are the 3rd Thursday of the month). If you would like to see a sample agenda or have questions, email me at ltimmer1@comcast.net or call me at 457-3708.

Thanks and I hope to see you at our next meeting.
Liz Timmer, Chairperson

2019 Meeting Schedule		
January 17, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
February 21, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
March 21, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
April 18, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
May 16, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
June 20, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
July 18, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
August 15, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
September 19, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
October 17, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
November 21, 2019	6:45 pm [Thursday]	Georgetown Public Library
December - NO MEETING	- - -	- - -

Little Cordelia's Request

Little Cordelia's grandmother had an old-fashioned way of measuring a yard by holding one end of the goods to her nose and then stretching the piece at arm's length.

One day Cordelia found a bit of ribbon. Carrying it to her grandmother, she gravely requested,

"Grandma, smell this and see how long it is." — [oldfashionedamericanhumor.com]

~ 2019 Museum Open Houses ~

Old Glory & the People Who Served

Tues.- March 5 -10 to Noon

Sat.- March 16 - 2 to 4pm

Tues. - April 2 -10 to Noon

Sat. - April 20 - 2 to 4pm

Tues.- May 7 -10 to Noon

Sat. - May 18 - 2 to 4pm

Tues. - June 4 -10 to Noon

Sat. - June 15 - 2 to 4pm

Tues. - July 2 - 10 to Noon

**The Life & Times of First Jenison
Christian Reformed Church**

Sat. - July 20 - 2 to 4pm

Tues. - August 6 -10 to Noon

Sat. - August 17 - 2 to 4pm

Tues. - September 3 -10 to Noon

Sat. - September 21 - 2 to 4pm

Tues. - October 1 -10 to Noon

Sat. - Oct. 19 - 2 to 4pm

Holidays at the Jenison Museum

Sat. Dec. 7 - 1 to 4pm

Sat. Jan. 4, 2020 - 2 to 4pm

*Also available for individuals and groups
by appointment. Call the museum at
616-457-4390 or
Ken Williams at 774-6523.*

~ 2019 Special Events ~

Old Time Movie Night - FREE

March 12 - 7 pm - Georgetown Public Library
Blissveldt Romance and other short films

1956 Tornado Documentary & Discussion - FREE

April 23 - 7pm - Georgetown Public Library

Bus Tour of Historical Jenison

June 19 - 1 pm - \$10/ticket

Bus Tour of Historical Jenison

September 25 - 1 pm - \$10/ticket

Grand Lady Boat Ride

October 12 - Noon - 2 pm. - \$10/ticket

Membership & Volunteering

Support the local history and museum by becoming
a member. A year's dues is just \$10 [Jan. to Dec.].
[Form on last page]

We are always excited to have new people volunteer.
Come to a meeting or open house. We will be happy
to show you what we do.

Two Sailors were talking about assignments they would like to get.

First Sailor: "Someday I'd like to ride on a submarine."

Second Sailor: "Not me! I wouldn't set foot on any ship that sinks
on purpose!"

Two Jenison Men and their Passions

This month highlights two men with very different passions. First, Jay George Cowing and his Honey Bees and second, Bill Johnson and his submarine.

Jay G. Cowing and Honey Bees



Two cans at the Museum - "Cowing Brand Pure Honey."

Jay G. Cowing was born November 2, 1873, Jenison, son of George Cowing and Euphemia Johnson. George Cowing was a stone mason and farmer in Georgetown township. Jay married Marianna V. Mason on November 19, 1914, at Ivanrest, Wyoming Twp., Kent County. It appears they did not have any children. His wife was a school teacher when they married. Jay had one sister, Mrs. Menzo [Mary] Burton.

Jay was a railroad fireman and then engineer early in his working life and had lived in Grand Rapids for a short time. He eventually returned to Jenison and his father's farm which was located at 1375 Baldwin - [location is now the Baldwin Woods condos.] In 1910, Jay was living with his parents and still working for the RR. but he was already involved in building up his bees and their hives. One 1917 news article stated that he had more than 15 years experience with beekeeping. By the time he married Marianna, he gave his occupation only as "apriary." It would seem that Mr. Cowing had left the railroad by 1914 for his beekeeping.

As early as 1921, Cowing Apiary was one of two largest apiaries in West Michigan with 300 colonies as well as being one of the largest commercial producers of honey in West Michigan. He was known as an expert of Queen bee management and was especially noted for transporting his bees to Michigan's upper peninsula for the clover season and returning them and the honey yield by train in the autumn.

For 20 years, Mr. Cowing was a state bee inspector. He was also a life member of the Michigan Beekeeper's Association serving as president for some time and was a member of the Tri-County Beekeepers Association. He was often called upon to lecture at various events and venues. Jay Cowing was considered a pioneer leader in the state's beekeeping industry. He was also a member of the Masonic lodge No. 322, F&AM in Grandville.

Jay George Cowing died January 4, 1955, at his home on Baldwin street in Jenison, survived by his wife, Marianna and a nephew, Clyde Burton of Florida.

Sources:

Holland Evening Sentinel, Holland Michigan, 23 July 1953, page 12
Lansing State Journal, Lansing Michigan, 28 Jan. 1936, page 36
Lansing State Journal, Lansing Michigan, 9 March 1938, page 19
Herald-Press, St. Joseph Michigan, 9 July 1941, page 7
Grand Rapids Press, Grand Rapids Michigan, 21 September 1921
Gleanings of Bee Culture, April 1917
1884 Census - 1900 Census - 1910 Census - 1920 Census - 1930 Census - 1940 Census
1914 Marriage record - 1917/18 WWI Draft Registration
Death certificate - Grand Rapids Herald Obituaries
Five pound tin Cowing Honey pails donated by Alfred John Sterken in 1999. [pictured]



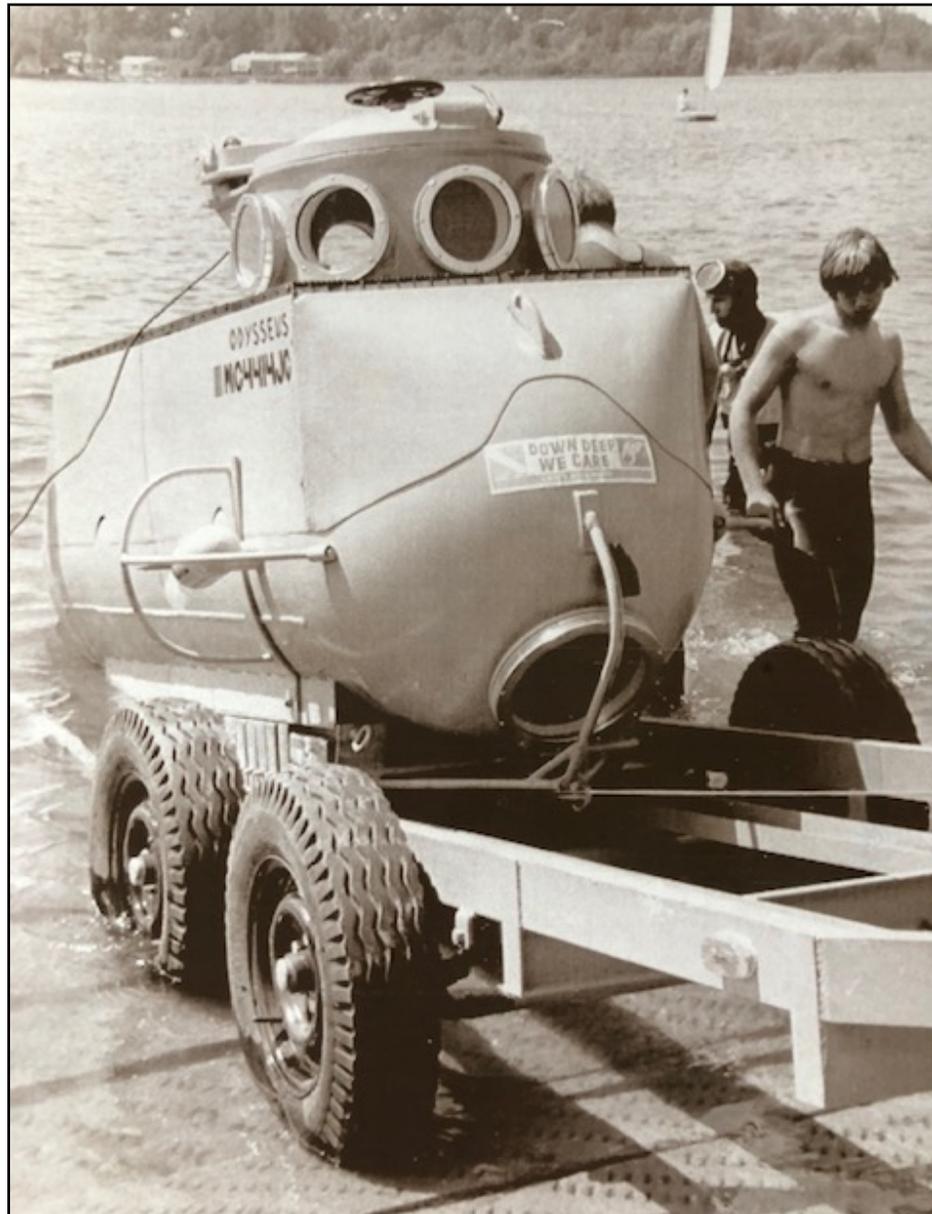
Bill Johnson and his Submarine

William "Bill" Johnson was born September 13, 1925, in Troy, Ohio, to Wm. H. Johnson and Ethel Mae Martin. Bill had a fascination with things that floated. In childhood, he made a canoe out of a sycamore tree which promptly sank. Later, he made a small craft from an old washing machine and built a diving helmet from a five-gallon paint can when he was 13 years old.

During World War II, Bill served three years aboard a submarine. His fascination was now deeply imbedded in his mind and heart. It was the early 1960s when he was living with his family in Traverse City that he bought a 34-foot tank car. He had enlisted a friend to help him turn the car into a submarine. However, his friend lost interest and Bill could not do the project alone.

Then about 10 years later, Bill and his family moved to Jenison. Here he acquired a high-pressure propane tank. "The fittings were all high-pressure type things, and it was a simple process to add on to it" he said. That "simple process" cost Johnson \$3,000 in parts and lots of work. His wife, Jackie, and their three sons pitched in to help. It was designed as a one-man vehicle and Mr. Johnson said it would "hold air for six days."

Finally, the 14-foot, 5,000 pound creation was ready for testing. Bill took his submarine to various local lakes to test. At first, it would not submerge. He added more weight until it went down 45 feet. Most importantly, it came back up!



Johnson's Submarine [above]

Though the submarine was designed for one person, with a little squeezing, Johnson took each of his three sons for a trip below the water. Jackie, his wife, said that she

was a hold out for a time but eventually went down as well. Jackie also informed us that Johnson took his submarine down 500 feet in Lake Michigan.

Bill died July 21, 1984, in Grand Rapids. He was survived by his wife, Jackie, three sons, two sisters, both of Ohio, and one aunt of Indiana. Bill and his family lived on 20th Ave., Jenison.

Sources:

Jackie Johnson

The News-Palladium [Benton Harbor, MI.] July 21, 1972, page 18

Escanaba Daily Press [Escanaba, MI] July 23, 1972, page 15

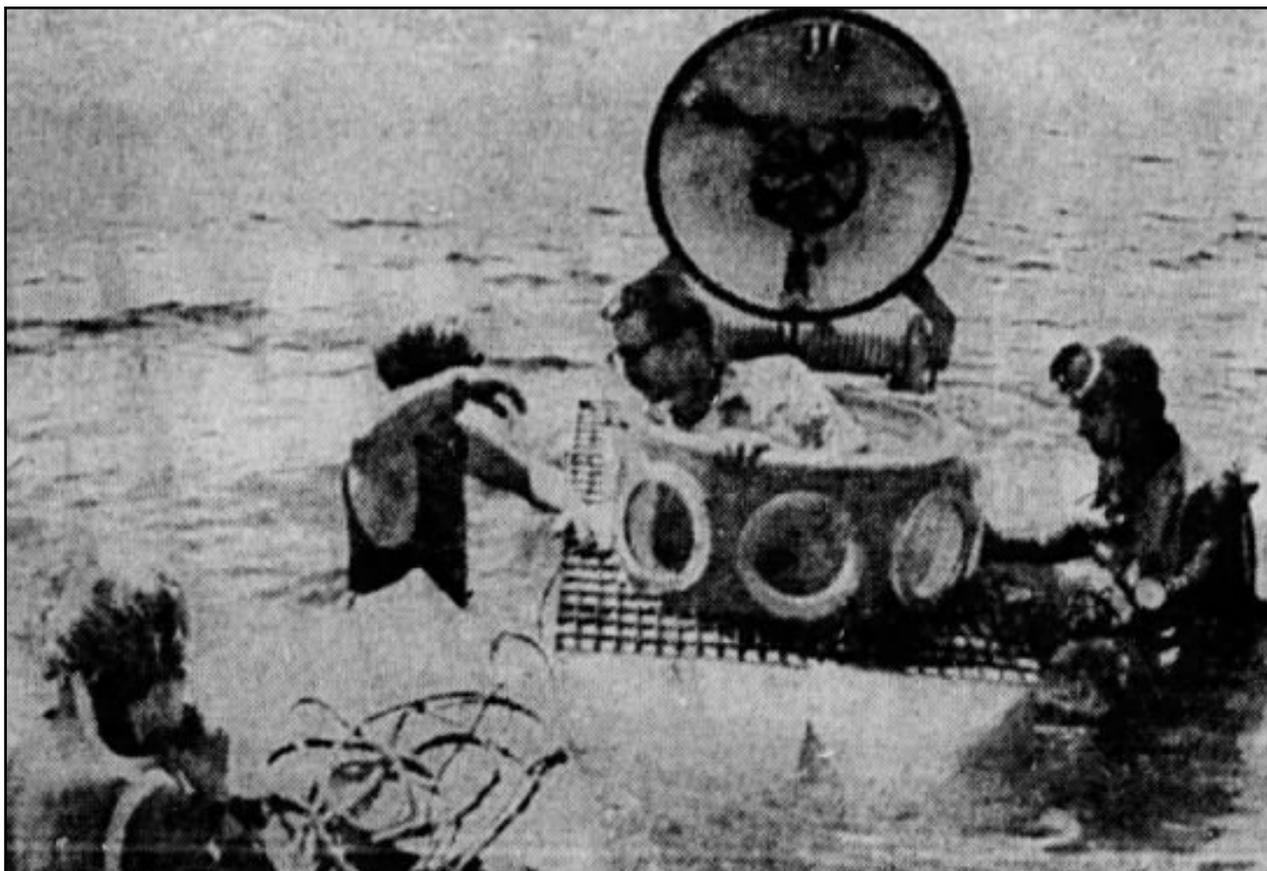
Obituary, Grand Rapids Press [Grand Rapids, MI.] July 23, 1984

Ohio Birth Record

Military File

1930, 1940 Census Records

- Bill Going Down in his Submarine -



Editor's Desk



I'd like to give a big Thank You to the scouts of Troop #354 for helping us bring down the Christmas decorations from the attic. Your help was GREATLY appreciated. *[See photo]*

I'd also like to welcome Ron Cheyne who has volunteered to be part of our maintenance staff. It will be fun working with you, Ron.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Healthy 2019!! We look forward to seeing you.

Q: Why did the bee get married?

A: Because he found his honey

Q: Who protects the Queen Bee?

A: Her Hub-bee.

[source: <http://jokes4us.com/animaljokes>]

Membership Form for Jenison Historical Association

Amount: \$10.00

Today's Date: _____

Check one: New Renewing

Name: _____

Address : _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Make check payable to the Jenison Historical Association

Mail to: P.O. Box 664 Jenison, Michigan 49428