



~ 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

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457-1193

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457-3016

Archivist - Barb Semeyn [2020] 457-9343

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

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Editor - Ronnie Aungst [] 780-1056

Contact Information

Museum phone: 457-4398 to leave a message

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Facebook: Jenison History Association

HAPPY SPRING!!

Spring is finally arriving and Sandy Wensink is already busy getting the flowerbeds ready! They were so beautiful last year!

In February the boy scouts from Troop #354 helped us return the Christmas decorations to the attic storage. A big thank you to them!!

Now on display at the museum are antique rare U.S. Flags and WWI and WWII uniforms. Also featured military personal from both wars. Check the Open House schedule for visiting hours.

We will be having a documentary and discussion of the 1956 Tornado which hit this area. The event is free and will be at the Georgetown Public Library April 23rd at 7 pm. Come share your stories!



~ 2019 Museum Open Houses ~

Old Glory & the People Who Served

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 ~

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.].
Membership 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.

The Gentle Art of Weeding.



2019 Meeting Schedule		
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	- - -	- - -

Please join us!

Wisdom and Laughter from the newspapers

Clark: "How did the alarm clock work? I suppose you got up the moment it went off?"

Blake: "Yes, I had to. Didn't have anything in bed to throw at it!"

St. Joseph Saturday Herald, July 7, 1900

A little laughter, now and then,

Is relished by the wisest men.

Grand River Times, July 8, 1857

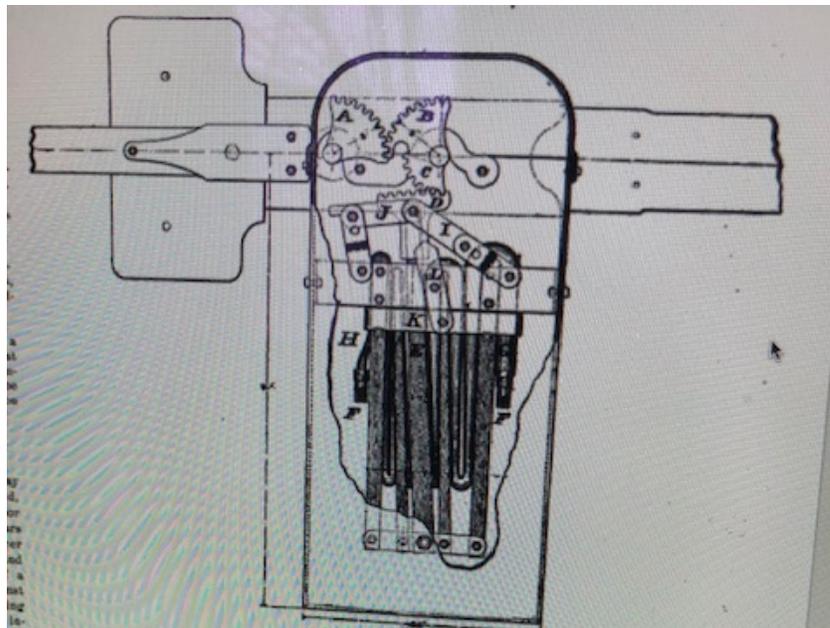
"Son," a father told his growing boy, "just remember one thing: I know a lot more about being young than you do about being old."

oldfashionedamericanhumor.com

~ A BOOM FOR JENISONVILLE ~

In December of 1889, a group of men led by Mr. Alexander J. McDonald representing the Pneumatic Power and Railroad Gate of Chicago arrived in Grand Rapids looking for a new location. Mr. McDonald, holding the control and patented articles for railroad gates, frogs, machinery and general railroad supplies which were made at the Chicago foundry, wanted a less expensive location to operate. Muskegon, Saginaw and several suburbs of Chicago had made offers of sites. After several days of looking, the men decided on a location in Jenison.

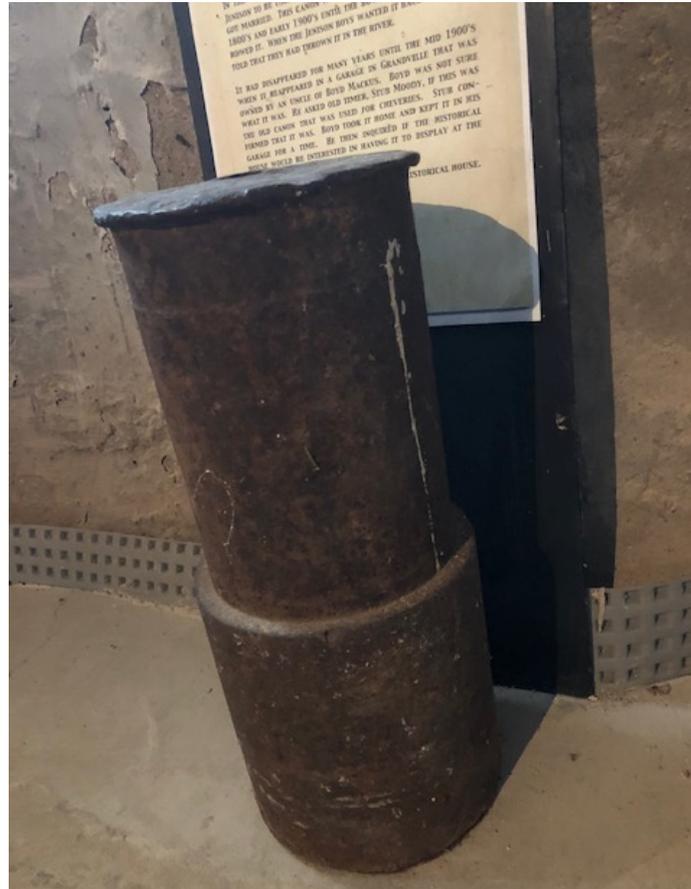
Newly patented railroad gate produced at the new Jenison company in picture



The company had decided to move its entire plant to Jenisonville. The newspapers reported that “Luman Jenison was in the city [Grand Rapids] very happy over the newest boom the bright little village bearing his name has received.” The company had been re-incorporated with a capital stock of \$300,000 and Mr. Jenison and Mr. Melvin B. Church along with others from the area had subscribed liberally to the stock.

By the spring of 1890, The plant was being built. It was described by the newspapers as a large machinery and engine room of 60x210 feet, brick venerated and two stories high. The plant would be on 10 acres of ground adjacent to the railroad tracks and

would employ upwards of 200 men. This was a bit exaggerated as legal documents show the company bought five acres with an agreement to purchase five more acres.



cannon from the foundry which can be seen at the Museum

The foundry was built but then, a certificate for 1,000 shares of stock issued in the name of A. J. McDonald was "abstrusted" from his office by parties unknown. The stock was found in the possession of a Mr. Fish who was attempting to sell it through his attorneys. This led to accusations of attempts to break up the company and a legal fight in the courts. By June 1891, Luman Jenison, now the main creditor, had a suit against A. J. McDonald. The suit was virtually a "closing up" or "settlement" of the Pneumatic Railroad Gate Manufacturing company. Luman Jenison won the suit and was awarded \$19,000. He became the sole owner of the plant.

144 BUSINESS COMPENDIUM OF

L. & L. JENISON,
JENISON, MICH.
MANUFACTURERS OF ALL KINDS OF

Hard and Soft Wood

Lumber

SHINGLES AND LATH.
ALSO DEALERS IN
FLOUR, FEED, GRAIN AND

General & Merchandise

Try Our Leading Brand of Flour,
"PRIDE OF THE VALLEY."

The Jenison Manufacturing Co.,
MANUFACTURERS OF

RAILWAY CROSSING GATES
.. AND ..
RAILROAD APPURTENANCES.

Luman looked for a new company to take over. By 1898, a company moved into the plant naming it the Jenison Iron and Engine Works. Preston Rice was the Chairman of the company. Things were looking better. Unfortunately, crisis once more visited this Jenison venture. On March 21, 1903, fire destroyed the entire plant leaving only the chimney standing. The treasurer, F. C. Marshall, reported that the loss was \$30,000 and 60 men lost their jobs. He also stated that the plant would be rebuilt but possibly not in Jenison. He was correct...it was not in Jenison.

Following the fire, two young men, Charles Smith and Charles Burton both of Grand Rapids, were arrested for stealing iron from the plant by the night watchman, Mr. McGrath. They had nearly filled a wagon.



**AERIAL VIEW OF JENISON -
STAR MARKS THE EGG PROCESSING PLANT**

The above picture shows the location of the egg plant which was also the location of the Jenison foundry. On the right side of photo you can see the intersection of Main and Chicago Dr. with McDonald's on the corner. [approx. 1972]

~ Farm Bureau Egg Processing Plant ~

It was 1958 before another company would occupy this land next to the railroad tracks. A large new building was built by the Farm Bureau for the processing and marketing of eggs. The business' claim to fame was its hard-cooked eggs which were sold to institutional and commercial eating establishments. The eggs were hard-cooked, peeled and cartonized in automated equipment under the strictest sanitary controls. It was the only facility in the nation to meet USDA standards. They had a capacity of 1,200 dozen cooked eggs per day. Business was thriving, however, fire would strike again. On December 24, 1973, fire destroyed the egg processing plant. The loss was estimated at \$450,000 to \$500,000 and included 1,000 cases of eggs. It completely wiped out the hard-cooked eggs production facility. Once again, a decision had to be made about rebuilding. Farm Bureau Services decided to relocate. The number of jobs lost is unknown.

“Ground Broken for Egg Center”

“..... The \$325,000 complex, to be completed by September, is designed to replace an egg processing plant in Jenison that burned to the ground last December.” —
Farm Bureau “Michigan Farm News” Vol. 53, No. 28, page one
subject: rebuilding Jenison egg processing plant in Cascade.

Sources: For Jenison foundry story - -

Grand Rapids Evening Leader, 12/12/1889, pg 1; 4/22/1890 pg 1;

5/6/1890 pg 1; 6/12/1891 pg 1;

Chicago Tribune, 4/23/1890 pg 6; 2/15/1891 pg 18

Muskegon Chronicle, 9/29/1891 pg 3; 3/23/1903 pg 1;

Grand Rapids Press, 3/23/1903 pg 1;

The Railway Review, Chicago 1893, 4/1/1893 pg 203

County of Ottawa, State of Michigan document 070-366, 11/26/1890

Advertisement; Ottawa County Business Directory, 1892-3; Vol. !!, page

144

Sources: for Egg Processing Plant story - -

Holland Evening Sentinel, 12/28/1973 pg 10;

Livingston Co. Daily Press and Argus, 4/18/1873 pg 47

Detroit Free Press, 2/25/1973 pg 35;

Membership Form for Jenison Historical Association

Amount: \$10.00 per year

Today's Date: _____

Circle 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