



Jenison Historical Association

Preserving the History of Georgetown Township

Jenison Historical Association 2025 Annual Report

During 2025, 18 community open houses were held March to November at the Jenison Museum – the first Tuesday of the month from 10 a.m. to noon and the third Saturday from 2 to 4 p.m. There were 519 visitors to the Jenison Museum which included the Christmas Open House on the first Saturday in December.

We also offered individual small group tours. Often time, also, when folks see cars in the parking lot, they will stop and see if the museum is open. Those working at the museum are always happy to show folks around and often do. If requested, tours are still provided to Jenison Public classrooms, the 2nd graders of the Christian schools and homeschoolers. Jenison Christian Elementary School brought 45 students through the museum in December.

We hosted several historical presentations throughout the year. Six of these were either held at the Library or Georgetown Connections and were open to the public. Special presentations were also scheduled with specific groups when requested such as Sunset Manor, United Methodist Church, Grandville Women's Club and Waterford Place in Jenison. Each year we try to create new presentations. In 2025, two more History of Jenison units were added. This means there are now 3 different presentations about Jenison history, each covering a different portion of the community. A total of 445 people attended these special presentations.

One project we were especially proud and excited about was the reprinting and relaunching of "Bend in the River", a history of Grandville and Jenison from 1932-1972. This was a joint project with the Grandville Historical Commission and Schuler's Books. Book relaunching's took place at the Georgetown Library in March and the Grandville Library in April. Authors of the book, Marilyn Galer and Esther Kunnen shared with those present the process of writing the book.

JHA members continued work on inventorying artifacts in the museum making sure they are recorded in the Association's software. Inventory of the first floor of the museum is complete. Two JHA members, Mary Raper and Ronnie Aungst, have worked in the Local History Room at the Library on Wednesdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. They also served as resources for 5 community

members having questions regarding their families. There were 48 visitors to the room during the year.

An example of how JHA is preserving Jenison history is a project one of our members, Mary Raper, is working on called “Jenison in the News”. This series of books was inspired by the Carl Bajema Collection at the Grand Rapids Library. During his lifetime, Carl collected clippings of historical interest to him between 1830 – 2000. After his death, the books were divided into subject areas and placed into 1,735 binders, one of which was “Ottawa County: Georgetown Township” and another, “Ottawa County: Jenison Park”. After reviewing these two, Mary decided to compile a sequential collection from several area newspapers, so that a story might form of the people and places from 1848 to our present day.

She began working on this project in September of 2024 and by the end of 2025 put the following binders together. They are now bar-coded and on the shelves of the Local History Room:

- Jenison in the News: 1848 – 1899; 1900 – 1909; 1910 -1915; 1916 – 1930.
- Jenison Electric Park in the News: 1892 – 1927
- Hanley and Shackhuddle in the News
- Bauer and Canada Hill in the News

There are many interesting stories in these books, along with names and places of days gone by. More years are planned for the Jenison in the News series.

In addition to the Bajema Collection, Mary’s resources for these clippings are the Joint Archives of Holland, Genealogy Bank, Newspapers.com., and the Grand Rapids Library. At the Grand Rapids Library, she found microfilm copies of the Grandville News between 1909 and 1911. “De Grondwet” newspaper was published between 1871 and 1938 in Holland, Michigan. Most of it was written in Dutch. Thanks to Mieke Korstange for translating the multitude of clippings. JHA member, Veronica Aungst, helped locate some of the clippings for this project, also.

As part of our community awareness campaign, we participated in the Trunk or Treat and the Holiday Market at the Library this year.

The Jenison Quarterly, the Jenison Historical Association newsletter, is currently being sent to 359 people via email. This is an increase of 78 from 2024.

During 2025 members spent 1,425 volunteer hours at the museum hosting open houses, working on artifacts inventory, cleaning, and maintenance. Many hours were also spent by members working on projects outside of the museum

such as the Local History Room, making presentations or working at home doing research.

2025 Goals Update:

- Achieved but Ongoing – Several new members have joined JHA this past year.

2026 Goals:

- Encourage active participation from dues paying members by requesting help with specific projects.
- Engage the community with different ways of marketing historical presentations, community events and museum open houses.
- Expand the ways in which we use our Past Perfect software.
- Recruit active/new members especially younger folks.
- Recruit and train a volunteer museum curator.
- Create a JHA Procedure Manual to how various “jobs” and processes are completed.

On behalf of the Jenison Historical Association, I want to thank Georgetown Township employees for the upkeep at the museum and the Georgetown Township Board for their continued support, especially the painting of the Jenison Museum. We look forward to working with Gene DeWitt, our Township Representative for 2026. Thanks too, to Justin Stadt and Andy Reinstra for being our “go-to” people at the Township. Last but not least, a big thank you to Rob Bristow of the Library and his staff for their willingness to assist JHA whenever asked.

Submitted by
Liz Timmer, Chairperson
Jenison Historical Association