



Jenison Historical Association Footnotes

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

September 2009

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...

STORY OF THE VAN A. WALLIN HOUSE AND THE WALLIN FAMILY

Coming from England in 1836, the Erie Canal provided a waterway to the West and Michigan for the Wallins. The trip west from Detroit was through unbroken forests with stops to clean the road of fallen timber. Men walked most of the time; women and children occupied the lumber wagons. There was some annoyance from Indians. The Wallin's first home was a log cabin of one room near the present city of Buchannan, Michigan. They were plagued with the ague, fever and mosquitoes.

In 1848, Van's grandfather, Dr. C.C. Wallin, bought a tannery where Van's father, Franklin, had worked the previous three years. C.C. Wallin continued his work as a doctor of medicine.

The area near Saugatuck, Michigan (at that time called the "Flats") became the

Wallin's next home. They bought a tannery there partly due to the hemlock trees that were best for the tanning process. They got bark for the tanning process as far away as Ottawa County.

In some areas, the tanneries preceded the sawmill due to the need for leather shoes, harnesses and saddles. Van's Uncle Thomas renamed the small town where they lived "Dingleville" because everyone's grazing cows wore bells with different sounds so owners could identify them. The cows "dingled" out in the morning and "dingled" back at night.

Van's father, Franklin B. Wallin, was called "Deacon Wallin" as he helped organize (January 1860) the first church in the village of Saugatuck. He was also active in the organization of the Saugatuck Cemetery where the Wallins, including Van A. Wallin, are buried.

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Happy



Thanksgiving

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

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

From the Archives (can't)

(Continued from page 1)

Because Franklin had broken a leg and could not enter the army with his younger brothers, he was elected representative to the "War Legislature" of 1861.

After selling the tannery, the Wallins moved to Chicago and built a tannery there. During the Chicago fire, October 9, 1871, the Wallins had to vacate their tannery. The fire was at the front door and they were moving bundles of leather, office things, etc., out the back door and across the river. They restarted their business at 53 South Canal Street.

Moving back to Dingleville/Saugatuck area, the Wallins re-established their tannery business in 1879-80. In October, 1881, Van's father moved the family to Grand Rapids. After 30 years the Wallin's Dingleville tannery closed.

In 1881, the Wallin Leather Company, a Michigan Corporation, was formed. Nearly all of the stock was owned by Van's father, grandfather and uncle. The plant began operation in 1882 and made only sole leather for footwear. The bark for tanning came from Northern and Upper Michigan.

Earlier, Van had been sent to Grand Rapids to attend school and lived with Mr. and Mrs. Hanchett, uncle and aunt of Benjamin S. Hanchett, Jr. who, with his wife Bessie, turned out to be neighbors of the Wallins in Jenison. Van attended Grand Rapids Business School to study bookkeeping. In 1883, Van started as bookkeeper in the Wallin Leather Co. of-

rice at \$9 a week.

In Grand Rapids, Van saw electric street lights for the first time. At that time the belief was that electric lights were too unreliable to be used indoors so gas lights were used inside. There were horse-drawn streetcars. Electric ones came later.

On June 21, 1893, Van A. Wallin married Lily Whittelsey. They honeymooned at the Chicago World's Fair. V.A. died in 1942 and Lily died in the early 1950's.

The auto replaced horses to some extent by 1906. Van's first car, a 1903-4 Oldsmobile proved to be unreliable. He was advised to not stray too far with the car. There were no concrete or asphalt roads, only bank gravel and toll roads which were privately owned.

In 1905 the Wallin Tannery became part of a larger organization, but they didn't sell the name of their company. The sign "C.C. Wallin & Sons" first hung in 1851 was taken down. Van Wallin was involved with the organization and administration of the National Association of Tanners, was Director of Central Leather Company and President of Wallin Leather company. Van spent a lot of time in Washington, DC during Taft's and Wilson's administrations and lived in Washington with his family several months.

In 1917, the Wallins bought 230 acres along the Grand River and named it "Wallinwood Farm." This acreage he purchased from the Boynton's. It was located along 10th Avenue in

Jenison. Ten years later, the Wallins bought the old George Weatherwax farm of 140 acres adjoining the property he had previously purchased.

The Weatherwax property included a house, built in the 1850's, and a barn. The Wallins rebuilt the house in 1928 and moved from Chicago in April 17, 1929 to their new "Country Estate which they renamed "Wallinwood Springs."

The architect who designed the renovation won an award for its design in 1929 which led to the Ladies Home Journal, a national magazine, to do a feature article on the home. The article was published in 1930 and the Schellenbergs are grateful for the generosity of Frances Wallin Shaw, granddaughter of Van A. Wallin, who gave the 1930 issue to them.

Robert Shaw, his wife, Frances, and their children also lived in the house for a brief time. Robert Shaw was an attorney in Grandville.

In 1990 a subsequent feature article was done on the home after Kathleen Schellenberg sent a letter to the Ladies Home Journal, explaining the recent acquisition of the 1930 issue.

Second generation Wallins, Franklin and Agnes Wallin, moved into the home in the early 1950's. They made some renovations and changed the kitchen to the standard of the day, red and white.

The home and surrounding 300 acres, as well as three other residences, were held in the Wallin family for

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Meeting Minutes—

Submitted by **Nellie DeLaat**

Present: Nellie DeLaat, Yvonne Williams, Ken Williams, Liz Timmer, Ruth Lowing, Mike Timmer, Virginia Timmer, Barb Semeyn, Grayce Lancaster

Association business

Review September minutes: Motion made to accept minutes as written by Ken W. Seconded by Barb S. Motion passed.

Treasurer’s Report: Motion made to accept treasurer’s report as written by Mike T. Seconded by Barb S. Motion passed.

Webpage update: Ruth will be meeting with the webpage developer to learn how to make changes to the page.

Election: The Trustee positions held by Grayce L. and Joyce K. up for election. Liz will contact them about running again.

2010 Meeting Schedule – Dates listed below. Liz will contact Library about meeting room.

- Thursday, January 21
- Thursday, February 18
- Thursday, March 18
- Thursday, April 15
- Thursday, May 20
- Thursday, June 17
- Thursday, July 15
- Thursday, August 19
- Thursday, September 16
- Thursday, October 21
- Thursday, November 18
- No meeting in December

Museum business

Maintenance Report: Mike is still checking on the sprinkler system at the Museum. He reminder anyone going out of the house to set the alarm.

September Open House -- It went well. The Advance was there to talk picture of Virginia. Mike will be working on adding to the display to create a Then and Now more permanent display that could be put in the basement.

October Open House – Ken is coordinating the “Mucking Around” display. He shared what the display will entail. He has pictures and maps for the display.

Holiday Open House – Grayce & Nellie will begin the first Saturday in November. Ken and Mike were asked to bring the decorations down from the attic. Grayce will coordinate the decorating of the house. Anyone who has not committed to assisted should call Grayce for the schedule.

2010 Open House Themes

- January 9, 2nd Holiday Open house 2-4 p.m.
- March 20 2-4 p.m. – Blissveldt Romance & the picnic videos will be shown. Coordinator: Nellie
- April 17 2-4 p.m. – Theme: Cedar Crest Dairy
Coordinators: Ken & Ruth
- May 15 2-4 p.m. – Theme: Then and Now
Coordinator: Mike
- July 17 2-4 p.m. – Theme: Haires Landing (cemetery) & Riverboat Dinner Coordinators: Ken & Yvonne – Liz will re-search the dinner after open house
- September 18 2-4 p.m. – Theme: Coffee at Tiffany’s Coordinator: Barb
- October 16 2-4 p.m. – Theme: From Forest to Sub Division (stump fence) Coordinators: Ken & Liz
- December 4 1-4 p.m. – Theme: Holiday Open House Coordinator: Grayce & Nellie

Other business

- Ken talked to a woman about having a 2012 celebration about the War of 1812.
- Found a cemetery plot of a person called Weatherwax
- Ken will contact Neil Dood about stump fence

Liz will contact Questors who wanted to hold their November meeting in the house and then have a tour, which we do not allow in the museum because of the potential of damage to the house and its furnishings. This is the standard policy and will be adhered to whenever the association receives this type of request. Liz will give the group the dates of the holiday open house.

2009 Meeting Schedule

Thursday, November 19 – -Georgetown Library

No meeting in December, 2009

All meetings start at 6:45 PM unless noted.

2009 Museum Open House Schedule and Themes

December 5 from 1-4 p.m. – Holiday Open House -- Grayce

January 9, 2010 from 2-4 p.m. – 2nd Holiday Open House

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three generations from 1917 to 1985 when Dirk and Gretchen Nyenhuis approached Robert and Francis Shaw with a plan for developing the property. Originally, the Nyenhuis' sought to purchase only several acres, but the terms of the Wallin wills specifically stated that the property was to be sold in its entirety and only if no heir of the Wallins contested the sale.

The Nyenhuis drew up plans for the development of the 300-plus acreage which included condominiums and a golf course. The Shaws were pleased with the integrity demonstrated by the Nyenhuis plan and gave them permission to use the "Wallinwood" name that Van A.

Wallin gave to his "Country Estate," as the name for the development.

The Schellenbergs were business partners of the Nyenhuis early in the development, but have since sold their interest, yet retained their lot and home.

Interesting features of the home include beams from the Weatherwax barn, used in the living room ceiling, and a central staircase and foyer. The home boasts a large dining room, living room, four bedrooms, plus a first-floor study/media room. The Schellenbergs have renovated the kitchen, but the majority of the house remains the "Dutch Colonial" style as it was when the Wallins lived there

Sources: V.A. Wallin, The Michigan Wallins, from Stratford-on-Avon 1791 to "Wallinwood-on-the-Grand," 1933. Toren Printing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Robert & Kathleen Schellenberg, This Old House, brochure.

Letter from Frances Shaw, Dec., 11, 2000.

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	\$ 908.34
Total Expenses 2009	\$ (457.84)
Total Equity	\$ 2,761.78
Receivables-	
Unpaid Dues	\$ (40.00)
Total Liabilities	\$ 40.00
Cash on Hand	\$ 2,761.78

Income:	10/14 thru 11/3/09	Year to date 09
Books	0.00	35.00
Donations	0.00	483.75
Memorials	0.00	0.00
Dues	0.00	350.00
Mill Print& Photos	0.00	10.00
Stationery	0.00	26.50
Sub Total	\$0.00	\$905.25
Interest	0.41	3.09
Total Income	\$0.41	\$908.34

Expenses:	10/14 thru 11/3/09	Year to date 09
Equipment Rental	0.00	0.00
Dues & Subscriptions	0.00	0.00
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	\$0.00	(\$457.84)
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.

Holiday Open HUse



**Saturday, December 5th
1-4 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

JHA sends a thank you to Curt and Diane Coty for all their help with the design and technology to make this happen.

Content ideas can be sent to info@jenisonhistory.org



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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

November 19, 2009 6:45 PM

Georgetown Public Library

Members Encouraged and General Public Welcome