

# JHA NEWSLETTER



Issue 2, Apr/May/June 2018

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## JHA Update

We have been busy! We did a booth at the Rivertown Mall Expo. We also had the first Round Table Discussion at the Senior Center. The topic was the 1956 Tornado and other tornados of the area. A very nice turnout for this event. Lots of memories shared. The "Quilts from the Past" event started in March. Lots of folks coming to see them. There's still time to visit these beautiful pieces!

Bob Essenburg stopped by. He's done an article on Borculo and the interurban. Very interesting and lots of pictures. Check it out at <https://borculo.weebly.com/blog>

We have also been busy setting up displays at the Georgetown Library and at the Jenison Artisan Market at 7640 Riverview Dr. Stop

by and check out our handiwork when you are out and about. Now that spring has sprung, we hope to see you all soon.

## Candid

Young Poet —

"What do you think of my spring poem?"

Editor —

"I think the spring you got it from must have been dry!"

*Detroit Free Press, May 25, 1890, page 8*

## **MOSS FAMILY HOMESTEAD 104 YEARS**

*by Mary Raper and Ronnie Aungst*



in November 2017, Ottawa County Parks Department purchased 1.28 acres of land with a house located at the end of 12th Ave. next to the Grand River in Jenison. This property has now been added to the Bend Area park and the house will eventually be used for special events. This is great news for our park but also for the Moss house as it will be preserved for future generations to enjoy. Here's a bit of history about the Moss Family Homestead.

The 1876 plat map shows Mr. E. Sweeney owned the property. It does not appear that he lived on the property so we might assume that he had bought the land for the lumber. By 1880, James and Catherine [Mulholland] Munro owned the property. They had migrated from Canada, and from census records, we know that they had 6 living children. Two of those children are of particular interest here...George and Jennie. Jennie married William Wadsworth and they settled on the property next to the Munro family. The Wadsworth were well known in Jenison. James Munro died in 1892 and son George, who never married, stayed on the property with his mother. At that time, the Munro property was about 63 acres. In 1905, George purchased an additional 15 acres from Hattie Newton, a widow. This brought the property up to about 78 acres and connected the farm to the Grand River. It was about 1910 when George began building a house for his mother and himself. In January 1911, Catherine died. Both James and Catherine are buried in the Boynton Cemetery in Bryon Center, Michigan. George completed the house. Then due to a change in his health and a desire for something new, sold the house with the 80 acres, having never lived in it. He sold to Cornelius J. and Hattie [Reminga] Moss in July 1913. Now the story begins of the Moss Homestead.

Cornelius J. Moss was born in Grand Rapids in 1882 to Jan A. Moss and Hilje "Helen" Karp. His parents had immigrated to Michigan from the Netherlands in 1880. Cornelius grew up in Grand Rapids. He had secured work in Georgetown township and there met his wife, Hattie Reminga, daughter of John Reminga and Jennie Boersma. They married in 1903 and in 1904 their only child, John, was born. Cornelius, known as C.J., was a general farmer those early years and C.J. and Hattie farmed a short time in Byron Center. As stated earlier, CJ and Hattie bought the Munro farm in 1913 with its beautiful new house.

CJ and Hattie's great granddaughter, Julie [Carle] Snider, gave us this description of the house: "The house consisted of a large fieldstone foundation, three porches - one was enclosed; inside, the basement had the fieldstone walls which were plastered over, a cement floor, a large room where the old "octopus" furnace sat, and three smaller rooms consisting of coal bin, storage and canning rooms. The furnace originally burned wood then coal and finally gas. The main floor saw some major changes in 1953/4. The present dining room was the original kitchen and the original kitchen was a "summer kitchen." It was also the room where you took your bath in an copper tub and it had a pitcher pump well. A bathroom was added by using part of the back porch and part of the den. Before this, there was just the old outhouse. The wall between the front and back parlor was removed to create one large living area across the front of the house. The second floor had a small hallway and four large bedrooms. One bedroom had three doors - one to a closet, one to the main walk in the attic above the kitchen and one to a flight of stairs to the upper attic. The exterior of the house is the same as it was when CJ bought it except for some small changes on the porches - two on the front and the back porch. CJ added a wagon shed, grainary, chicken coop, pig coop, silo and a milk house. There was also a small cabin on the property when the Moss's bought it. Its not known if Sweeney or George Munro built this but it eventually gave way for the milk house. ***Cabin shown below***



Its in this area that the original well was located. CJ was a dairy farmer and he kept the milk cold in the well while waiting to go to market. The herd numbered about 80 along with a variety of other animals both in CJ.'s time and down through the years. CJ, Hattie and son, John, loved the community and their farm. Some of their neighbors were the Wadsworth, Lowing, Boynton, and Cheyne families. John attended the Haire school. The Moss family even enjoyed visits from the Indians who would often take shelter in CJ's barn. CJ also served as a substitute Sheriff. It was a good farm and a good life.



In 1931, Hattie died. CJ remarried in 1935 to Dena Borgman. Little Joyce took every opportunity to visit both the Moss farm and the Eisenga farm. She adored her grandparents and all the wonderful animals and adventures the farms offered. Then tragedy struck. CJ and Dena were killed in an auto - train accident in Grandville in 1945. CJ is killed immediately and Dena died within hours. A terrible tragedy felt deeply by both family and neighbors.

The Moss house would be empty for a few years. In 1936, Alice Isenga Moss dies. John remarries to Mary Ruiter in 1937. They had one daughter who died the same day of her birth. Joyce Moss would remain an only child. Joyce married Douglas Carle and they moved into the Moss house. They would remain there their entire lives raising a daughter and two sons and a host of animals. Because Doug had to work at an outside job, Joyce and the children took on the job of running the farm with the exception of machinery. For Joyce, this farm was everything. It was, according to her daughter, her safe place, her place of peace and happiness. For Julie, Scott and Kip Carle, the memories of animals, adventures on the River, and so much more live on.

Over the years, the property was sold off to the local gravel companies until all that was left was the house and 1.28 acres. It has provided a wealth of joy and memories to four generations of the Moss family for 104 years. Thankfully, the Moss house will continue to celebrate joy and create memories for many more years to come. **Above: Joyce Moss Carle; Moss Farm at an earlier date; John Moss and Alice Isenga below**





1- John Moss w/Joyce Moss Carle, Jan Moss [CJ's father], and CJ Moss  
2-John & Alice Moss    3-Moss Farm



**Above: L-R: Julie, Joyce, Doug, Kip and Scott Carle**

Julie Snider, great granddaughter of C.J. and Hattie Moss, provided us with so many memories and pictures that we can't fit them all here. We are so grateful to her sharing with us and allowing us to keep the history of the Moss farm alive.



## **JHA Museum Open Houses**

Also by Appointment - call 616-457-4398 or 774-6523 [Ken Williams]

### **QUILTS FROM THE PAST**

March 6 - 10 to Noon    April 3 - 10 to Noon  
March 17 - 2 to 4 pm.    April 21 - 2 to 4 pm.

### **DISCOVER THE HERITAGE TRAIL**

May 1 - 10 to Noon    June 5 - 10 to Noon  
May 19 - 10 to Noon    June 16 - 2 to 4 pm.

### **VISIT THE MUSEUM**

July 3 - 10 to Noon    July 21 - 2 to 4 pm.  
August 7 - 10 to Noon

### **GRAND RIVER LANDINGS**

September 4 - 10 to Noon    October 2 - 10 to Noon  
September 15 - 2 to 4 pm.    October 20 - 2 to 4 pm.  
November 6 - 10 to Noon

### **CHRISTMAS AT THE JENISON MUSEUM**

December 8 - 1 to 4 pm  
January 5, 2019 - 2 to 4 pm.

## **SPECIAL EVENTS**

### **THE POOR FARM - May 17 - 7 p.m. - Free Event**

Documentary - location: Georgetown Twp. Connections [Senior Center]

### **HISTORICAL BUS TOUR OF JENISON - June 20 - 1 p.m. - \$10/ticket**

### **jenison history presentation - August 16 - 7 p.m. - Free Event**

location: Georgetown Twp. Connections [Senior Center]

### **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION 2 - September 13 - 1 p.m. - Free Event**

Area farming [i.e. dairy, muck, etc.] - location: Georgetown Twp. Connections

### **GRAND LADY BOAT RIDE - October 13 - Noon to 2 p.m. - \$10/ticket**

## JHA Trustees

**Chair** - Liz Timmer [2019]  
457-3708

**Vice Chair/Curator/Tours** -  
Ken Williams [2019]  
772-6523

**Treasurer** - Ruth Lowing [2019]  
540-4709

**Social Secretary** -  
Nellie DeLaat [2019]  
457-1193

**Recording Secretary** -  
Linda Droog [2018]  
457-3016

**Archivist** - Barb Semeyn [2019]  
457-9343

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

**Trustees** -  
Yvonne Williams [2019]  
772-6523

Gene Kort [2019]  
534-6769

**Township Rep**- Becky Steele

**Editor** - Ronnie Aungst  
780-1056

## Museum Location

28 Port Sheldon Road - Jenison, MI. 49428  
Phone: 616-457-4398

## Meeting Schedule

Meetings are open to the public and held the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:45 pm. Please note the location.

### Dates for 2018:

April 19 - Rosewood Reformed Church\*  
May 17 - Georgetown Senior Center  
June 21 - Rosewood Reformed Church\*  
July 19 - Georgetown Twp. Library  
August 16 - Georgetown Senior Center\*  
September 20 - Georgetown Twp. Library  
October 18 - Georgetown Twp. Library  
November 15 - Georgetown Twp. Library  
December - no meeting

\*Rosewood Christian Reformed Church  
20th and Rosewood  
\*Georgetown Twp. Senior Center  
8th Ave.

## Contact Information

Contact Trustees at their phone number or leave a message at 457-4398 or [info@jenisonhistory.org](mailto:info@jenisonhistory.org) or find us on Facebook at Jenison History Association.

## Membership

Become a member and support the local history and museum. We have members from the teens into the 80s. Please join us.

Membership is just \$10 per year.

## Volunteer

Do you have a couple of hours a month? Consider volunteering at the museum. The opportunities are wide open: train as a docent to work during open houses or for the 3rd graders visit in May; assist with displays, general housekeeping, Christmas decorating or maybe you have a skill that you would like to share with us.

Come to any meeting or open house or you can contact us at 616-457-4398 to leave a message. There's plenty of opportunities. We can help you find your niche.

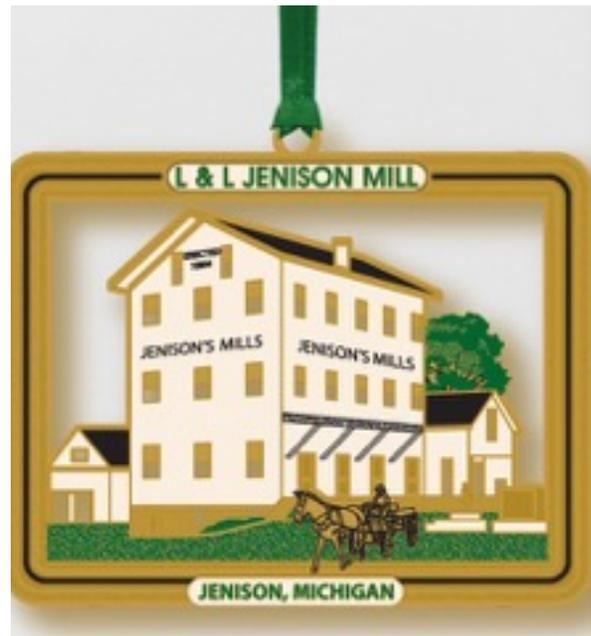
AND we are very fun people!!

## Gift Shop

We have many Jenison History items available for purchase. They make great presents for your history lover and support the museum.

Some items include Bend In The River book, ornaments, historical drawings and stationary.

Find us on the registry of the Historical Society of Michigan at [www.hsmichigan.org](http://www.hsmichigan.org)



## The Native River People

*Julie [Carle] Snider, great granddaughter of Cornelius and Hattie Moss, shared this story with us which I thought was very interesting and reminds us of a much earlier time on the river. [in her own words]*

"Of course you know the people have been on the river long before any white settlers even thought of it. But they did not stay in one location but travelled with the seasons. I remember as a child being on the banks of the Grand River and finding ancient marking trees. These were trees that were bent and tied in a certain direction for navigation. The tree was small and tied to point the way for gathering grounds or to locate farmers that did not mind a visit. Over time the trees grew and were retied. The last one I remember still held its shape but the tree had died. It was a large tree by that time and I use to climb and sit on the tree. The bend over the years was amazing. Flat almost and pointed towards Wadsworth's house.

During C.J.'s time the visits of the people were during fall and spring. They were not long visits but they did time them well because during the fall and spring, the "Sears, Robuck Catalog" from Chicago, IL., would be delivered to C.J. Yes, the native people would order items from the catalog via C.J. They would stay in the barn and pour over the catalog and place an order. C.J. would mail the order in and when the goods came, they would come and pick them up. Order in the fall, pick up in the spring or the other way around. By that time a new catalog came and they would order again. Native people in their travels would sometimes stay in the barn longer if someone was ill or about to give birth. A dairy barn is a cozy place, upper level where hay is stacked with cattle below. It is warm and out of the elements.

The main gathering grounds for many native bands was located around what is now Bauer Road & 24th Ave. all the way to 36th and up the clay hills. Largest gathering would take place on the lands of Ties Isenga and would continue all the way to Pete Vos' property. These gatherings I guess would be the same as the Pow Wows of today. These gathering grounds were used for hundreds and hundreds of years. Started way before white settlers came to the area. Years later on the Vos and Isenga property after plowing the fields with teams of horses you would be amazed at the artifacts that came to the surface. Wilbur Vos had a collection of thousands of arrow heads.

Yes, the Moss and Isenga families liked the river Indians and had a positive relationship with them." — — — —

## Editor's Desk

Would you like a specific topic covered in our newsletter? Maybe something you have always wondered about concerning Jenison and/or Georgetown township history? Drop me a line and I will dig into our files to see what I can find. Email me at: [grmira@yahoo.com](mailto:grmira@yahoo.com) and let me know what your thoughts are.

Also, I would like to send along our best wishes for a speedy recovery to two of our dedicated volunteers, Nellie DeLaat and Jim Galer. Know you both are in our thoughts and prayers.

Jenison Historical Association

P.O. Box 664  
Jenison, Michigan 49428

[www.jenisonhistory.org](http://www.jenisonhistory.org)