

# Southport

*The Newsletter of the Kenosha County Historical Society*

July 2006

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## PUT YOUR FAMILY IN KENOSHA'S HISTORY! "IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE KEEPERS"

The Light Station is Kenosha's most memorable and visible historical restoration yet.

You may memorialize or honor family members, mentors, or yourself by naming a piece of this historical place – still a beacon to all.

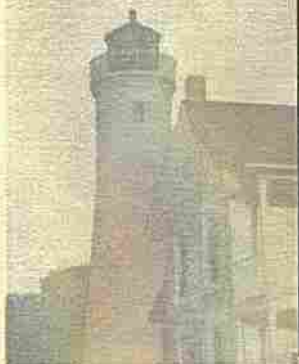
The fund raising campaign for the completion of the Southport Light Station Restoration kicks off the first weekend in August (Aug 5th and 6th). Don't miss it! The first "Open Tower" tour weekend and the KHC Classic Car Show will make the occasion festive and informative.

"How can I, my family and friends help?" you ask.. Here are five ways.

### Commemorative Bricks (4" x 8")

You can pave the walkways around and to the Tower with bricks. Inscribe commemorative bricks for \$75 each or three for \$200. Each will offer you two lines of 12 characters. A birth and death date may be added as a third line.

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



### First Keeper Bricks (8" x 8")

There were eight Head Keepers at the Southport Light Station of the U.S. Light Service. These eight bricks will have a Head Keeper's name and dates of service inscribed on them and are \$250 each. They also have two lines of 12 characters for your inscription and an optional birth and death date line. The Keeper Bricks will be embedded in the short walkway that goes to the Tower steps.

### Watch Shed Corner Markers

The Southport Light Station had a nearby Watch Shed northeast of the Tower. The light keepers used the shed as an office and for equipment storage. It also served as a Watch Room to make sure that the lights were burning all night. The shed is gone, but we will be setting four to eight markers to show where it was. A display panel will show photos of the shed and text that explains the work of the keepers. Each of these stone markers is \$250. They provide two lines of 12 characters for your inscription and, if desired, a birth and death date line.

### Window Sponsorships

All of the windows in the keeper's house will be custom made to resemble what was originally in the building in 1908. We have two complete historic windows remaining in the building (one each of the larger and smaller), which we will use as models for the historically accurate new windows. Underwriters may inscribe commemorative brass plates for each window. Underwrite first floor windows for \$1,000 each, and second floor windows for \$500 each. Donors may sponsor a window to recognize or memorialize others or themselves. On the first floor, families may team up, for example, to memorialize one to four persons with a window. Window recognition plates can accept a maximum of four lines of names. Call for details.

### Room Sponsorships

Each room will be named for a Head Keeper. Underwriting one of these rooms is a wonderful tribute for a family to make, and a meaningful civic gesture for your business. First floor rooms (four of them) are \$20 per square foot. They will be offered to donors first. Prices range from \$3,600 to \$4,800. Second floor rooms will be offered after the first floor rooms are taken. On the second floor, rooms are \$10 a square foot yielding prices from \$1,900 to \$2,400. Underwriters will be recognized at each room. Call for details.

Your sponsorship will allow us to finish the restoration of the Southport Light Station.

Call 262-654-5770 to help.

We'll mail you a sponsorship brochure with reply form. Or we'll take your pledge and gift by credit card over the phone.


Make your check payable to "Kenosha History Center," note "Light Station Restoration" on the memo line, and mail to:

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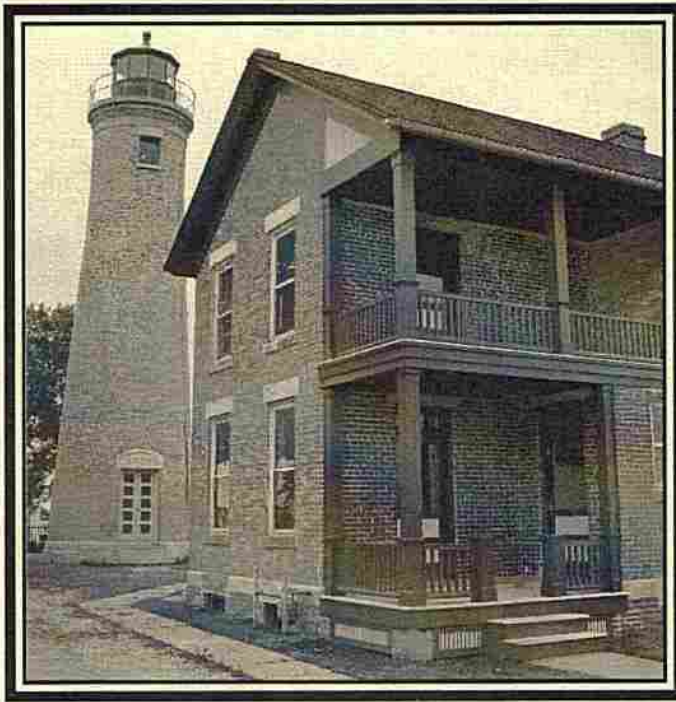
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**New Porch on the Keeper's House**

## Southport Lighthouse

### Renovation Update

#### *Recent Progress, New Grants, Next Steps*

We have finished the restoration work of our 2005-06 Coastal Management Grant. This included cleaning the brick, stripping paint from the brick in the porch area, demolishing the porch and rebuilding it as it was in 1908, tuck pointing, and brick replacement.

We have won another Coastal Management Grant and a Community Development Block Grant for 2006. They will allow us to finish the rest of the exterior work including stripping sills and lentils, pouring new walkways, re-grading the grounds, finishing masonry work, and re-roofing the south addition.

The HVAC system installation later this summer is included in the 2005-06 Community Development Block Grant. Mike Maki and Tom Schleif have been negotiating with the architectural firm and are close to a contract. Once the architect is on board we will begin the interior restoration. This fall and winter will be spent designing, receiving bids, and hiring the contractors to do the work.

Interior work beginning in the spring of 2007 will include new wiring, new windows (custom built to resemble the lighted double hung windows that were in the building in 1908), and restored woodwork and main staircase. Plaster on the walls will be patched or replaced, and floors refinished. We are hoping to have the first floor completed by fall 2007. We will then spend the winter of 2007-08 installing the exhibits and will have the building open for the summer of 2008.

The building and grounds may be rented when completed for weddings and parties. We are planning a small catering kitchen in the south addition.

Fund raising will be necessary to complete the restoration of the building. You can put your family in Kenosha's history. See the article on Light Station fund raising in this newsletter. If you would like to help with some of the work, or make a donation please call 262-654-5770.

**TOM SCHLEIF**


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


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# KENOSHANS IN THE BIG LEAGUES

By Don Jensen

Here's probably the most obscure bit of local baseball trivia that you're apt to come across.

**QUESTION:** Which Kenosha cemetery is the final resting place for more one-time major league baseball players than any other local graveyard?

**ANSWER:** Sunset Ridge Cemetery, near Highways 31 and S. Two ex-big leaguers are buried there.

Serious baseball fans will be familiar with more recent Kenoshans who played in the major leagues, pitcher Bob Hartman and, later, Dick Bosman, among them. Old timers will remember other names, players like Ollie O'Mara who had a career, mostly with Brooklyn, many, many, many years ago.

There were more players with Kenosha connections who made it to the "Bigs." This article does not pretend to be an exhaustive listing of them. I have merely tweaked the voluminous records of Major League Baseball for some trivial details in only one of the record book's countless obscure categories: Big League Ballplayers Before 1925 Who Died (and in some cases, were buried) in Kenosha.

According to MLB data, there were five, possibly six, in that virtually unknown sub-category.

The best known to Kenoshans, though for reasons totally apart from baseball, was Charlie Pechous. He was the late physician Dr. Charles E. Pechous Sr. who had a longtime medical practice in Kenosha. Born Oct. 5, 1896 in Chicago, Dr. Pechous died here in September 1980, and is buried in All Saints Cemetery.

Charlie Pechous was just 18 in 1915 when he broke into baseball with the Chicago Whales in the "other" league, the short-lived Federal League. Charlie, who played third base for the Whales, went on in 1916 and 1917 to play that position, and shortstop, for the Cubs.

Pechous was a husky 6-footer who weighed in at 170 pounds, batted and threw right, and, in his three year baseball career, played in 53 big league games. He played pretty good infield, with a .932 fielding average. His best batting year was 1917, with the Cubs, when he batted .244, though his lifetime average was only .180.

Several of the listed players came to Kenosha courtesy of the Simmons company. There was a great rivalry between the two big local semi-pro teams, the Simmons Bedmakers and the Nash Motormen, both of which deliberately gave jobs to ballplayers with pro experience to bolster their lineups.

Three who stayed on at their Simmons factory jobs after their playing days were over were Jack Hammond, Ben Dyer and Press Cruthers.

Hammond – Walter Charles ("Wobby," but more often, Jack Hammond) – was born in Amsterdam, NY, Feb. 26, 1891. He graduated from Colgate University and signed with the Cleveland Indians right out of college at the age of 24. A second baseman, he played his first major league game in April 1915. He played 35 games that year, but then, during WWI, he left pro ball to return to his alma mater, Colgate as the school's athletic director.

After the war ended, he took another shot at baseball. In 1922, at the age of 31, he returned to the Indians for just one game before being traded to the Pittsburgh Pirates. There he played 9 more games at second base before leaving baseball. The 5-ft., 11-inch, 170 pound infielder played in a total of 45 games in a two year career, with a lifetime batting average of a.222.

In 1924, he was hired by Simmons and played for the Bedmakers. A graduate chemist, he rose to become the superintendent of the plating department of the firm. He died, suddenly, Mar. 4, 1942. He was only 51.

Benjamin Franklin Dyer, born in Chicago, Feb. 13, 1893, broke into the Majors as a shortstop with the Giants in 1914. He played two years with the New York team, and was traded to the Detroit Tigers in 1916, and remained with them until 1919.

Ben Dyer was a multi-talented player, playing second, third and shortstop for the Giants; then every infield position, plus right field for the Tigers. He even pitched two games as a right handed reliever for Detroit in 1918, allowing no hits and no runs in his pair of outings. In six years in the majors, his lifetime batting average was .237.

He enlisted in the Navy in 1918, and when he got out of service, he was hired in 1921 by the Simmons Co. He played third baseman with the Bedmakers in the semi pro Midwest league for several years, including 1924. That year the team, which then included famed major league pitcher Wee Dickie Kerr, won the League title.

Later, he organized youth baseball in Kenosha and worked at Simmons until 1924, when he retired because of ill health. Nonetheless, he lived until August 1959, when he died after a long illness. He is buried in Green Ridge Cemetery.

Charles P. Cruthers Sr., was born in Marshaltown, Delaware, Sept. 6, 1890. The "P." in his name stood for Preston, and he was generally known as Press Cruthers. In two years, 1913 and 1914, he played a total of seven games at second base for the Philadelphia Athletics for the legendary Connie Mack.

The fact that he played so few games – only 3 in 1913, the year the A's won the World Series – is explained by the fact that he was playing behind Eddie Collins at second base. Collins, himself a baseball legend, was part of what was known, then, as the \$100,000 Infield, because of their total salaries. (Ah those were the days!)

Press Cruthers came to Kenosha in 1922 to work for Simmons and play on the company sponsored semi-pro team, which he did for 10 more years. He was in his 40s when he retired from the Simmons team. He went on to be elected Pleasant Prairie town clerk for

28 years, until 1960. He then moved to California, but returned to Kenosha County in 1969, to live with a daughter in Bristol. He died in September 1970, and is one of the two big leaguers buried at Sunset Ridge.

The fifth ex-major leaguer buried here, also at Sunset Ridge, was Edward Norman ("Ed" or "Ike") Corey. Mostly a semi-pro player, Corey was born in Chicago, July 13, 1897. He played for little known Chicago teams and also the Racine Horlick team. But he did get one shot at the majors on July 2, 1918, the right handed pitcher's only appearance in a painfully short major league career. He pitched but two innings, gave up a hit, a walk and a run, for a lifetime ERA of 4.50.

Corey later lived in Racine and played for the Horlick semi-pro club, but moved to Kenosha in 1938. For a time he managed the Town Casino, then worked at American Motors until his retirement in 1965. He died of cancer five years later.

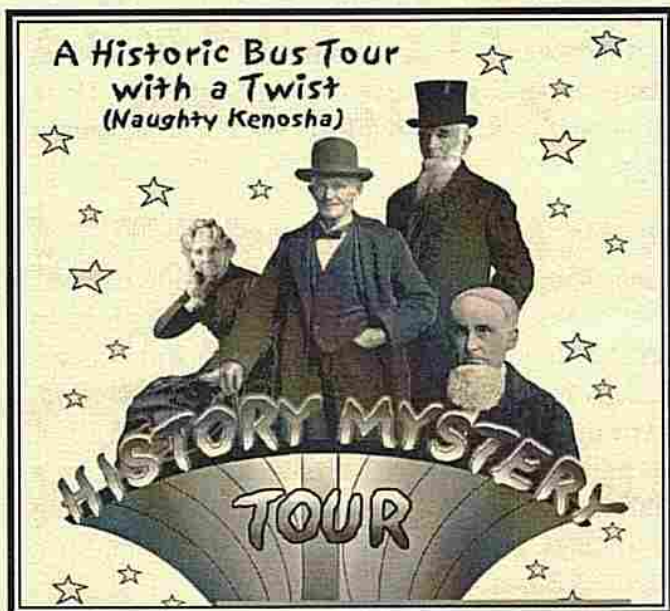
The sixth and final major league player that the records show passed on in Kenosha was Milo Henry Allison. He was an outfielder who played in the big leagues for parts of four years, 1913 and 1914 with the Cubs, and 1916 and 1917 with Cleveland, all as an outfielder.

In four years, he managed only 49 games, 60 at bats and the left handed hitter had a career batting average of .217. Apparently he was more a pinch hitter than a backup outfielder, since he only played in a total of 17 games in the field. Little more is known of Milo's later life after he left baseball in 1917, released by the Indians. Major league records show he died in Kenosha on June 18, 1957, but no record of him living in Kenosha was found in city directories and no obituary appeared in the Kenosha Evening News. He was buried, according to MLB in the Community Bible Church Cemetery in Lakewood, Wisconsin.

H a n s m a n n P r i n t i n g I N C .

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## It's Back!

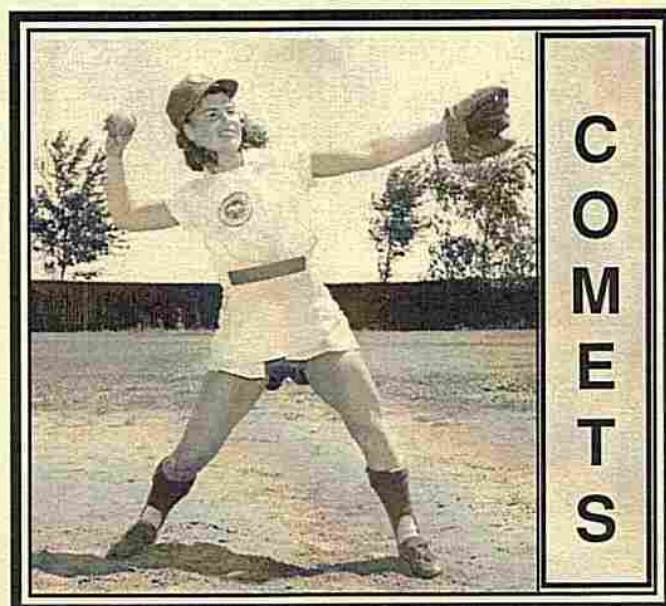
Yes that's right, the History Mystery Tour is back and set for Saturday Sept. 30. This fall's tour "Naughty Kenosha" will take a look at the underbelly of the city. Unsavory characters and scandalous events will be pulled from the closet by local Kenosha historian Don Jensen. He will conduct two tours 1:30 and 3:30 with a reception following at 5:00pm. Tickets are limited to 34 people per tour and will sell for \$35 each. We will be using the city's rubber wheel trolley. Call 262-653-5770 to order your tickets. Get them before they are gone!

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## "Take Me Out to the Ballgame"

Batter up for this pictorial display of Southeastern Wisconsin's baseball history. Venture to the 1880's when the Kenosha Regulars were Kenosha's best ball team. Visit the 1940's & 1950's when Kenosha proved girls could be All American League ballplayers. See photos of Kenosha's native Ray "Shorty" Berres whose career spanned years as catcher for the Dodgers, the Pittsburgh Pirates, the Boston Braves, the New York Giants and as the Chicago White Sox pitching coach. Special baseball artifacts, including an American Brass Company ball team uniform and an autographed baseball by the women players of the 1943 Kenosha Comets.

The exhibit runs from July 1 through October 29th, 2006.

The Kenosha County Historical Societies mission is to preserve the past to teach the future. Please come in and visit us at 220 51st Place on the north side of the harbor entrance. Hours are Tues - Fri. 10:00am - 4:30pm Sat. 10:00am - 4:00pm and Sun. 12:00pm - 4:00pm call 262-654-5770 or visit [www.kenoshahistorycenter.org](http://www.kenoshahistorycenter.org).

## KENOSHA NEWS

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## KHC Upcoming Events

### August 5th, 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM KHC Classic Car Show

Travel back in time! Visit the Southport Lighthouse on Simmons Island and enjoy the KHC Car Show in the field just to the north of the Lighthouse. All makes and models are welcome along with classic motorcycles. Admission is free and there will be food and beverages available for purchase. If you have a car or cycle you would like to show, the entry fee, which includes a meal, is \$10 per vehicle. Another reason to visit is the Pike Creek Rendezvous. It will be next to the car show. Plus the adjacent History Center's galleries will be open. Come for a great family outing day! It's all free.

### Scheduled Tours to the Top of the Southport Lighthouse Tower

This year the Tower will be open three weekends in August. Each of these Open Tower dates is associated with a major event on Simmons Island.

**Aug 5-6** The tower will be open Sat. 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM; Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This is the Pike Creek Rendezvous weekend.

**August 12-13** Tower open Sat. 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM; Sun. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Tall ships will be sailing away from the Kenosha Yacht Club.

**August 26-27** Tower open Sat. 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM; Sunday 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The Civil War Encampment on Simmons Island is a special treat for young and old.

Climbing the Tower costs only \$10 for adults and teens; children 8-12 years, \$5; and History Center members, \$5. If you are visiting during the warm months and would like to arrange a trip to the top please call 262-654-5770. We cannot guarantee accommodating you, but if one of the staff is free we will open the Tower for you.

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## KHC Golf Outing Sept. 12 at Brighton Dale Links

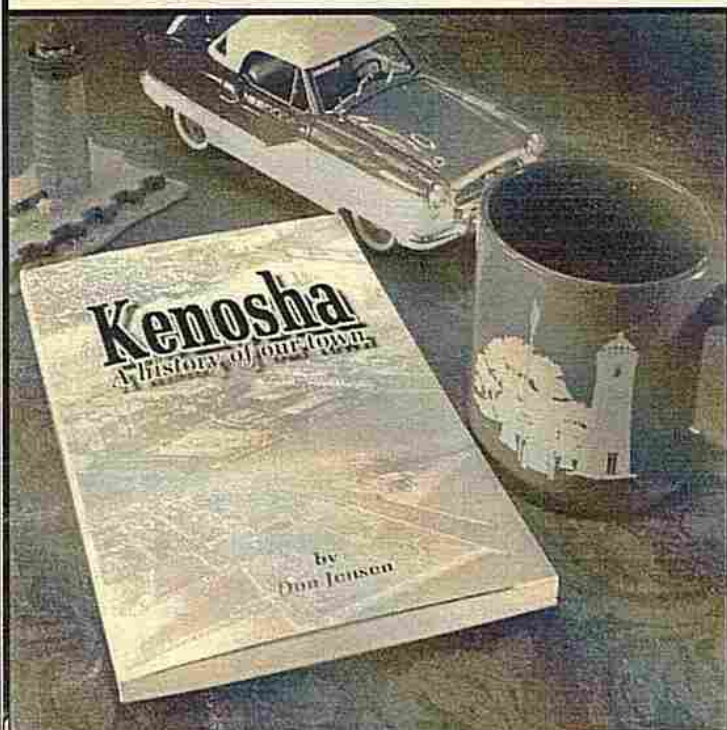
Join the KHC for an historic day on the links at Brighton Dale Golf Course. Golf fee is \$90 per golfer, which includes green fees, cart, lunch and dinner. Check-in is from 9:30 to 10:30 AM. Lunch from the grill is at 10:30 AM. Tee-off time (shotgun start, best ball) is at 11:00 AM. Cocktails from 4:00 - 4:30 PM. Pig roast dinner at 4:30 PM. The event is hosted by Kenosha County Historical Society President Kenn Yance and County Executive Allen Kehl. You will have the chance to win a new 2006 Pontiac (sponsored by LeMay Buick, Pontiac, GMC Cadillac Inc.) with a hole in one. There will be a closest to the hole contest using wood shafted historic clubs. It will be a fun day so please join us. If you don't golf, join us for the pig roast at only \$25. Call 262-654-5770 to make your reservation. This is a fundraiser for the Center, so please join in.

Your President,

Kenn Yance

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By Don Jensen

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## Kenosha History Center

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*Southport* is published quarterly by the Kenosha County Historical Society. Additional copies are available for \$1.00. The Kenosha County Historical Society is a non-profit organization supported by a grant from Kenosha County, memberships, an endowment, donations and private foundations.

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