



Southport

The Newsletter of the Kenosha County Historical Society

November 2006

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Cars of the Decade

On Display are a 1902 Jeffery, 1917 Jeffery, 1927 Nash, 1936 Nash, 1940 Nash and a 1959 AMC Rambler Ambassador

Grandmas Attic

Two Special Exhibits and the 41st Annual Christmas Open House on December 2 "Cars of the Decade" & Grandmas Attic

On Saturday December 2nd the Kenosha History Center will hold its 41st Annual Christmas Open House from 12 noon until 4:00PM Two choral groups will perform, the "Singing Angel Choir" directed by Marilyn A Cardello and the "Prairie Lane Singers" directed by Patricia Burke. WGTD public radio will broadcast live from the Center that afternoon. Refreshments will be served by "A Secret Treasure".

This day also marks the opening of two new exhibits, Cars of the Decade and Grandmas Attic. They will be on display until September 30th, 2007.

Continued on the next page

Cars of the Decade

Kenosha, WI (November 17th, 2006)—Cars of the Decade is the title of a new exhibit that runs from December 2 through Sept. 30, 2007 at the Kenosha History Center. On display are 6 Kenosha made autos that chronicle the auto manufacturing history in Kenosha. We start out with a 1902 Jeffery Rambler; the first year of production for the Thomas B Jeffery Co. Next is a 1917 Jeffery touring car, the last year of production for the Jeffery name. Charles Nash bought out the company in 1916 but produced the Jeffery until mid 1917 when the name changed to Nash. Also on display is a 1927 Nash, a 1940 Nash Coupe (the last year of production of autos by Nash until after WWII) a 1936 Nash and a 1959 AMC Rambler. Accompanying each car is an audio you can listen to that takes a look at what happened in the U.S. during the decade the auto was made, (sports, movies, music, news and what things cost in that particular decade).

Grandmas Attic

On display in our lobby exhibit area is Grandmas Attic, a large selection of artifacts from our collection displayed like they would be found in an attic: paintings, rugs, bicycles, trunks, hats, furniture, lamps and a myriad of other artifacts. Most museums have less than 10% of what they own on display This is a fun exhibit that lets us put out a large selection of unrelated things from our collection. Many of these items have not been on display before.

Gift Shop

The History Center gift shop offers some very unique items for your Christmas shopping: local history books, lighthouse miniatures, diecast AMC cars, historic photos and more. The gift shop is open on our normal business hours.

Events for 2007

This is a list of events for next year. Some of these events are in the planning stages and dates have not been confirmed

April Kenosha Harbor Klub Krawl; a music event featuring 10 bars along the harbor with 2-3 live bands playing at each venue. This will be a fund raiser for the Center

May We are exploring the possibility of a Historic Homes Tour as a fund raiser for the Center

May - October The lighthouse tower will be open the first weekend of each month to climb.

July 27-28 The Kenosha Homecoming Car Show. This will be the 105th anniversary of auto making in Kenosha. Over 700 cars are expected along with a Friday night parade with music and refreshments in Penoyer Park and the big car show on Saturday in Kennedy Park.

August 4 The KHC Car Show and open tower at the Lighthouse. Historic cars food and fun on the lighthouse property

September 2nd Annual Kenosha History Center golf outing An Historic Day at Brightondale Links

September 29 County History Mystery Tour A scenic Bus tour of Kenosha County highlighting many of the historic events that took place, narrated by Don Jensen

October 6-12 Cemetery Preservation Week and the Green Ridge Cemetery History Walk.

October 13 KHC Chili Cook Off Hot chili music and a lot of fun

October 27 KHC 129th Anniversary and Auction

The Tallships may be back in Kenosha in July and we will participate with a food stand and display tent if this event happens.



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President Mikes Coming Events and Season's Greeting to All Members

The Center is transforming itself once again for the Holiday Season. Please join us on Dec. 2 from Noon to 4 p.m. for the History Center's Annual Holiday Open House. Featured this year will be the Singing Angels Choir, the premier of "Grandma's Attic" in the main gallery, and "Cars of the Decades" in the Rambler Legacy Gallery.

As the board and staff look forward to 2007, we would like to thank everyone for their patronage throughout this year. We hope that you have enjoyed our events and exhibits in 2006 and that you and your friends will join us again soon. Next year promises exciting events. The Southport Lighthouse will be open one weekend every month from June through August, along with Lighthouse Festival again in August. The 2007 Homecoming Car Show is expected to feature over 700 Jeffery, Nash, Hudson, AMC, Jeep and Renault vehicles from across the country, along with a Grand Parade down 52nd Street and live entertainment at the Pennoyer Bandshell. The Harborside Klub Krawl will feature a number of great bands at Downtown and Harborside establishments. Returning in 2007 will be the Center's Golf Outing, our annual Chili cook-off, and our 129th Anniversary Dinner and Silent Auction. Stay tuned for event information in future newsletters and check the Center's website often for a schedule of events.

The Center's website -- <http://www.kenoshahistorycenter.org/> -- is being redesigned into an exciting, interactive and informative source of information. New features have been added including:

- * an on-line version of the newsletter,
- * membership and volunteer applications, and
- * coming events and exhibits listed on the home page.

The new website will mark the premier of on-line electronic shopping through the Center's gift shop, featuring both an electronic and downloadable order form. Interactive event and exhibit calendars will be added. In the future, expect to find on your new web home for the History Center longer versions of newsletter articles and other special content. The new and improved website will premier in 2007.

Make the History Center your "must stop" with guests this year!

Wishing Everyone a safe and enjoyable Holiday Season!

Mike Maki

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The Thomas B. Jeffery Story



Thomas Jeffery & a prototype Rambler

To accompany our newest exhibit in the Rambler Gallery, "Autos of the Decades," we are featuring articles on Jeffery, Nash and AMC in our newsletters. We have a 1902 and 1917 Jeffery -- the first and last year of production as a Jeffery -- on display. Here is a little history of the Jeffery Co. The complete version of this article will be available on our website www.kenoshahistorycenter.org.

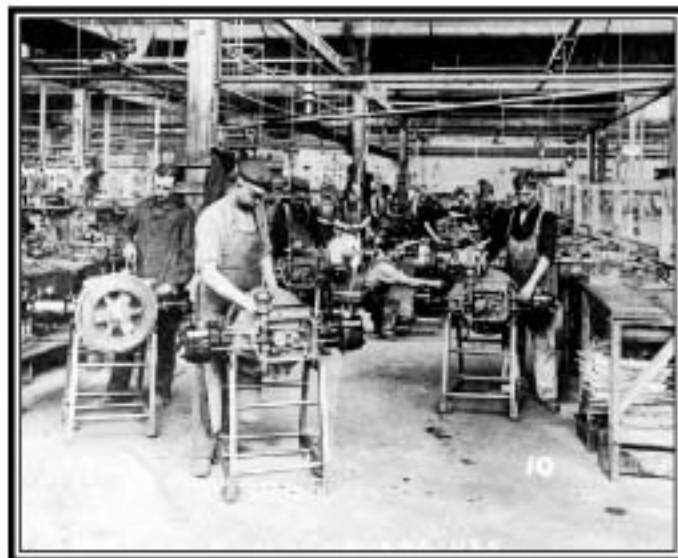
Thomas B. Jeffery's interest in transportation can be traced back to 1871, when he began to manufacture bicycles with parts imported from England. In 1881, Thomas Jeffery and Philip Gormully formed a successful Chicago-based partnership manufacturing "Rambler" bicycles as the G&J Manufacturing Company. G&J was the second oldest bicycle factory in the U.S. and perhaps the largest. During the G&J years, Jeffery experimented with transportation technology.

By the late 1890s, Jeffery and his son Charles were entirely caught up in the new automobile technology. G&J Manufacturing was sold to the American Bicycle Company in 1899 and the Jefferys went in search of a location for the production of automobiles. Kenosha had all the necessary requirements: an available building (the Sterling Bicycle Factory), easy access to lake and railroad transportation, proximity to a major market (Chicago), and a skilled labor force. In early December of 1900, T.B. Jeffery bought the vacant Sterling Bicycle factory, marking the beginning of Kenosha's nearly 100 years of automobile production.

1900 - 1903

The Sterling Bicycle plant was located at the corner of Park (59th St.) and Newell (24th Ave.). Local newspapers reported the purchase price for the 600 x 100 foot brick building and its equipment at a hefty \$65,000 and speculated that Jeffery would reopen the shop to produce his "Rambler" bicycles. T.B. Jeffery's announcement that the company would begin hiring machinists on Dec. 10, 1900 to produce automobiles came as a surprise to many.

In 1901, Jeffery produced two experimental cars, Model A and Model B. They sported daring innovations: an engine under the hood in front of the driver rather than in the rear and a steering wheel on the left, instead of the central tiller control. These concepts were abandoned by Jeffery, however, as too radical for the general market.



Inside the Jeffery Plant

On Mar. 1, 1902 the first one-cylinder "Rambler" automobile was sold at the Chicago Automobile Show, for \$750. In that year, 1,500 tiller-steered, rear-engine roadsters were built by the Jeffery Company. Jeffery's "Rambler" became the world's second mass-produced auto, one year behind Olds and one year before Ford. "Rambler" autos were distributed through Jeffery's network of bicycle dealers. Between 1902 and 1903, Jeffery was the second largest U.S. car-maker and employed 250 Kenoshans.