PRESERVATION RACINE NEWS

FALL 2015
Volume 2

1976 Preservation Racine Tour of Historic Places

The report of the very first tour is on file in Preservation Racine's archives. The tour date was October 3, 1976. The chairperson was Elizabeth Walker. Seven buildings were open with six being part of the tour and a seventh, The First Presbyterian Church, was open and staffed by its membership as a complement to the tour. The six buildings were Henrietta Benstead Hall (Emily M. Baker) the Masonic Club (Henry S. Durand), Horizon Hall (Charles R. Carpenter), the James Dickert Home (August Frank), the Johnson Homestead Gardens and the DeKoven Foundation (Racine College) where refreshments were served. The organization had yet to learn that the proper designation of a building is by its original owner's name. The ticket price was $3.50 and tickets were available by advance sale only. Sales amounted to $849.50 and the net profit was $708.50.

Committees and chairpersons were: Tickets-Hilary Krejcha and Mary Beth Kuehn, assisted by Mark Krejcha; Costumes-Roberta Fiene; Refreshments-Joan Edwards; Guides-Dorothy Osborne and Fran Trumbull; Publicity-Margo Drummond; Contacts for Homes and Insurance-Suzanne Foreman; and the Presbyterian Church contact was Nelson Peter Ross.

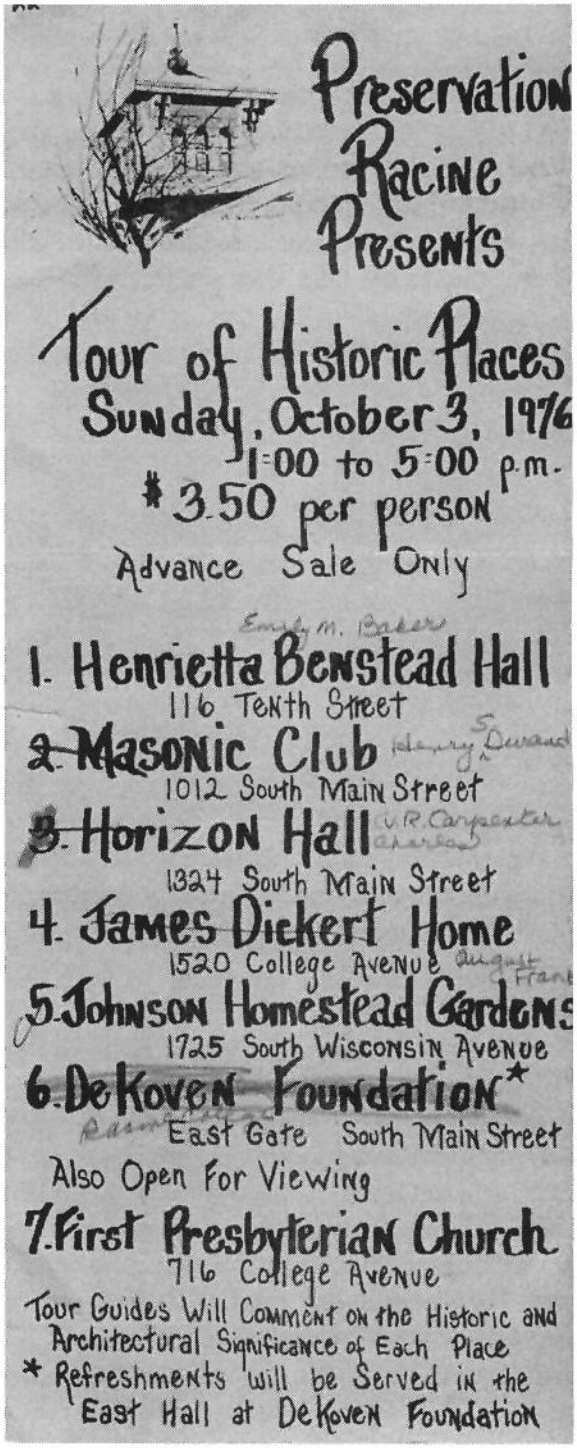
Elizabeth Walker's end-of-tour report concluded with this statement:

> "Because we worried about security (both the Perkins and Harnetts canceled after agreeing for that reason), we may have been overcautious about publicity."

Elizabeth agreed to chair the second tour in 1977.

Thus began the tradition of Preservation Racine's ensuing 40 tours over a period of 39 years.

Barbara Walter



A Historical Survey of the Near North Side

The locus for this year's Tour of Historic Places is the near north side, following the lake shore northwards from the mouth of the Root River as far as Wind Point. Since the tour will include houses and civic amenities, it might be useful to sketch a brief reminder of the history of this old part of Racine.

As we know, Racine was founded as "Port Gilbert" by Gilbert Knapp, who arrived here in 1833 and took title for the land that would become the Fourth Ward. This area became the northern part of the original village, incorporated in 1841. The southern part ran from the Cedar Bend loop of the Root River all the way to the lake. Even before this, the first piers were established in the harbor and by 1849 a light was installed on the north pier to facilitate safe shipping. When the Coast Guard building was erected in 1866, the light was transferred to it, until it was again relocated (as today's red beacon) at the end of the north pier in 1903.

Right at the beginning, brickyards were founded to produce the distinctive local cream brick. In the 1830s, the brickyards were to be found in and around the Cedar Bend area and from about the 1860s they crowded the lake shore all the way from the river mouth to Wind Point and beyond. Among the first of these lake shore brickyards was that of Fred Haumersen, whose yard later became part of the zoo. William and Otto Baumann followed soon afterwards (their pond became the monkey island), Francis N. Burdick, and Adolph Hilker and sons not long after that. In fact, the Hilkers operated the largest and longest-lived brick making concern with several yards, including an early one at Cedar Point, an 80-acre stretch at Wind Point (two acres immediately sold to the government as a campus for the Wind Point lighthouse), another at Lakeview Park, and yet another known as the Lake Shore Yard. So many names are associated with brickyards, shifting from sole proprietorships to partnerships and back again, that it can be difficult to establish who owned what and when. The crowding of the lakeshore, especially in the area that was to become the zoo, was such that the shore was said to be "ablaze" at night, the glare arising from the Hilker, Burdick and Baumann yards. One of the last brick making concerns, on what is now North Beach, was that of William H. Lathrop, founded in 1892. At age 74, this very different kind of brick making was one of Lathrop's last business enterprises. These were not cream bricks but sculptable sand bricks, made by infusing the sand with an unknown chemical and compacting the result with a hydraulic press.

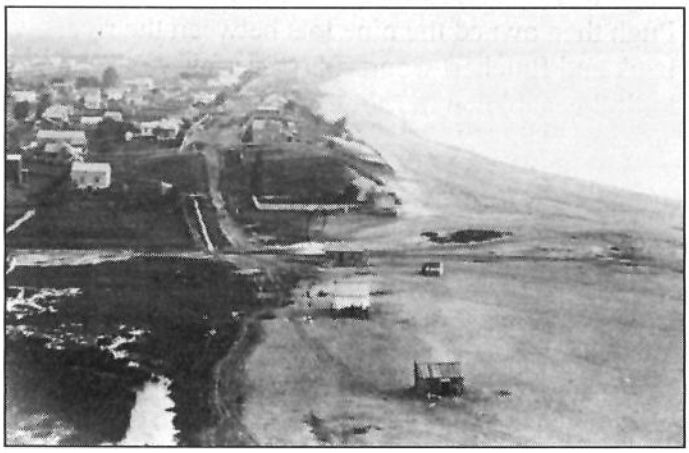
Beside the brickyards, along Michigan Boulevard and westwards, many of the brickyard laborers built their own cottages of the bricks they'd made. They were colloquially known as the "German cottages", reflecting the "German" (or, rather, Bohemian) ethnicity of the area. A prominent Bohemian was Karel Jonas, whose rather more elaborate house, also built of cream brick c.1880, was a few blocks to the west on Erie Street, and whose commemorative statue, by Bohemian-born sculptor Mario Korbel of New York, was set in this Bohemian area where High Street meets the lake shore bluff. Installed in 1912, it was transferred to Flat Iron Square in 1935.

Immediately south of the brickyards, new businesses also flourished. Among the first was a coal and lumber yard that was almost certainly located on the north bank of the river mouth. It was owned by Gilbert Knapp in partnership with one I.M. Hill, who employed the young William H. Pugh in 1874. Becoming sole proprietor in 1887, Pugh then owned the nine lots between the river bank and Reichert Court. Shortly afterwards, he built the stable on the southwest corner of Michigan Boulevard and Hamilton Street, whose future is now very uncertain. It was made of Mr. Lathrop's sand bricks.

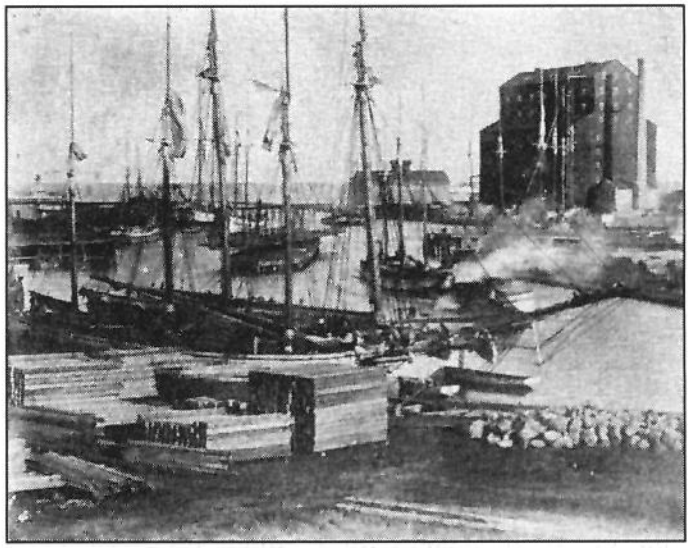
One block further north, the six acres of land on the northern side of Reichert Court became home to the Freeman Manufacturing Company after 1894. Founded in 1869 in the Cedar Bend area, this company made boilers for J.I. Case threshing machines, and an ever increasing range of farm

implements and machinery. Its operations building at 1201 Michigan Boulevard (on the northwest corner of the lot) seems to have been built in 1914. Within two years, this had become the main operations building of the Walker Manufacturing Company, an erstwhile near neighbor from the Cedar Bend area. A carjack maker, the Walker Manufacturing Company had been founded in 1908. By 1914 sales were at ¼ million dollars and a new plant was needed. Walker took over the Freeman building at 1201 Michigan Boulevard in 1916 and continued to go from strength to strength, supplying the army through World War I, and providing branded carjacks for Cadillac, Buick, Ford, Dodge, and more from 1921 onwards. After hugely successful expansion, the company was finally absorbed by Tenneco, who razed 1201 Michigan Boulevard in 1984.

One block further north, in the 1300 section, where the first lake water intake pipe was laid in 1886, stands the set of castle-like buildings of the Water Department, built in 1931–2 to the plans of Albert, Burdick and Hunter. The pumping station and filtration plant were once considered among the best in the nation. Further north again, at 1501 Michigan Boulevard (the site now occupied by the present octagonal bandstand), was the W.H. Weber Brewery. This brewery was founded in 1875 in the earliest days of pasteurization and the champagne-cork-like lightning stopper, the company was producing 300 barrels of weiss beer by 1878. The premises burned down in 1912 and never re-opened.



The view of the north shore (below left) was taken from the grain elevator on the south bank of the river, beside the Main Street bridge, before it was destroyed by fire in 1882 (see photograph below). It shows the lakeshore end of the area occupied by I.M. Hill, possibly at the very time that the young William Pugh was employed there (1874 onwards), and before he became sole proprietor in 1887. Moving north, the next block would become the operations campus of the Freeman Manufacturing Company. The next block was occupied by the Racine Water Department, which installed its first lake water inlet pipe there in 1886. One block further north again was the site of the W.H. Weber Brewery from 1878-1912. The unpaved street in foreground that continues onto the beach is Hamilton Street, and the northward street continuing the inland line of the shore is North Michigan Boulevard. The photograph is from the collection of Gerald Karwowski.



Everything seems to have stopped on the lake shore very suddenly. The clay lines started petering out in about 1900, just as fierce, mechanized competition arose from Chicago and Milwaukee, and the last brickyard closed in 1914. Weber Brothers brewery burned to the ground in 1912. The Freeman Manufacturing Company seems to have closed its doors or moved away by 1916. The area must suddenly have seemed desolate.

Already, however, new life was breathing into the area with the North Beach project of 1908, when the city began purchasing shoreline property with a view to establishing a beach. The program began

when Mayor Nelson acquired land from the road construction contractor James Cape just north of the Water Department to begin creating the beach, while residential properties on the bluff were also acquired and eventually razed to create the North Beach Park, complete with band stand built in 1921 (equipped with comfort stations underneath) on the site of the old Weber Brothers brewery. Further south, the brickyards of Haumersen, Baumann, Burdick and Hilker were all acquired in 1923 as a location for the zoo begun one year previously by Jacob Stoffel (who by coincidence was living in Karel Jonas' cream brick house on Erie Street). The zoo's castle-like administration and animal building was begun in 1936 as a WPA project to plans by Ellis A. Klinger, using bricks from the second city hall along with bars and ironwork from the county jail. Further north, the biggest of the Hilker brickyards became the Shoop Park golf course, the old clay pits making admirable hazards. Within a space of about twenty years, the lake front of North

This view of North Beach in 1908 shows the Weber Brewery at top left. The postcard is from the collection of Gerald Karwowski.

Racine went from the soot and blaze of heavy industry to the green and peace of tourism and leisure.

Pippin Michelli

From the President

Change is Good.

As the summer draws to an end I realize the more things change the more they stay the same. You will notice several changes to how the tour is being conducted this year. The main focus stayed the same; we have wonderful homes and public places to tour. What has amazed me this year is how some people have misunderstood the changes. The changes were made to make improvements to the security of the homes and the flow of people throughout the tour.

The security of the home is the main reason given by people that do not want to be on the tour. The tour committee checked with several other tours around the state and found that they do not list the addresses before the tour as an added security measure. That is also why the tour books with the addresses will be given to you the day of the tour. Anyone that cannot go on the tour will be able to get a tour booklet free after the day of the tour. The use of wristbands is another change to this year's tour. The wristbands are not set down in a home, or left in the car. The wrist bands are easy to see and do not have to be checked off as you go through the buildings.

I would like to thank everyone that is helping with this year's tour. The buildings we will be able to tour are just a sample of the many historic buildings in Racine. I hope you will enjoy seeing the buildings and learning some of the history of them and Racine. We all need to take advantage of seeing these historic buildings, we never know if something will happen to a historic building and we may not be able to see it the same way ever again.

Don Schumacher
President Preservation Racine

Life Along the Lake: Residential, Recreational, Commercial

Sunday, September 27, 2015,
Noon – 5:30 p.m.

For our Fortieth Annual Tour of Historic Places, we will be focusing on the lakeshore of North Racine. In addition to ten sites for visiting, we plan (weather permitting) a brief conversation about the area's history and changes in the North Beach Park area. There will also be local history projects by Alan Mills' Prairie School students on display, and an exhibit of this year's Century Buildings for those who could not join us at that ceremony in May. We have much to show you!

We are introducing some new logistical features this year for everyone's convenience, beginning with additional advance ticket sale outlets. Tickets can be purchased for $15.00 (cash only), September 1–25, at the following locations:

Burlington:

Gooseberries, Fresh Food Market;
690 W. State Street

Kenosha:

Andrea's; 2401 60th Street

Racine:

First Weber Group; 1100 North Main St.
Larsen's Bakery; 3311 Washington Ave.
Milaeger's; 4838 Douglas Ave.
Millers Flowers; 219 6th St
O & H Bakery; 1841 Douglas Ave.
4006 Durand or 5910 Washington Ave.
Personal Touch Flowers by Julie;
5445 Spring St., or 4060 North Main St.
Racine Heritage Museum; 701 Main St.
Uncorkt; 240 Main St.

Sturtevant:

Borzynski's Farm and Floral Market;
11600 Washington Ave.
Milaeger's; 8717 Hwy 11
Real Racine; 14015 Washington Ave.

And Online:

www.preservationracine.org (with credit card with PayPal)

We are using wristbands for admittance to each tour site. Your pre-purchased ticket will be exchanged for a wristband on tour day. You can redeem your ticket at any of four ticket table sites. You will get your tour booklet at that time. Ticket stations will be open at 11:30, tour hours are 12:00–5:30 p.m. You may also make cash purchases of tickets the day of the tour at these same ticket table sites for $17.00 (cash or check only).

(Continue reading for day of tour ticket table sites.)

2015 Tour of Historic Places, Preservation Racine

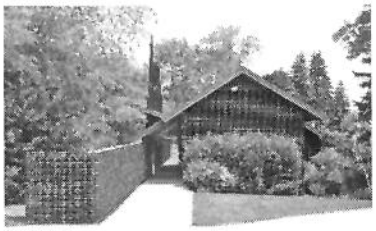
Wind Point Lighthouse Keeper's Residence

This is your unique opportunity to view the living quarters that since 1880 has housed lighthouse keepers and two assistants with their families. Both the grounds and residence will be on tour. Enjoy the exhibits on display as well.

For opportunities to climb the Lighthouse visit:
http://windpointlighthouse.com/tours

The Vitas T. and Evelyn Thomas House

Racine Architect Hans Geyer designed this house in 1966 with an inviting courtyard and a magnificent lake view. Tour this home and experience its view of nature, open interior flow and feelings of light and spaciousness.

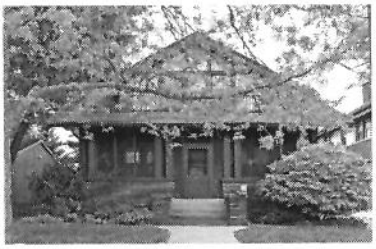


Village of North Bay Village Hall

Come see how architect James Dresser, who was once an apprentice to Frank Lloyd Wright, creatively designed this building with unusual brickwork and large windows which frame a lovely view of Lake Michigan.

The Harold and Edna Pugh House

This elegant lakefront home was built in 1930-- the Depression Era. In 2007 renovations were completed that respectfully honor the rich qualities of its past with modern updates and a backyard that highlights the beauty of Lake Michigan.



The Charles and Ora Ryba House

This 100 year-old gem has been home to only three families. Based on a popular design that spread from California, it has great charm and most of the original craftsmanship is still intact.

Share this information with friends and family
Invite them to come learn about Racine's Heritage and enjoy our beautiful Lakefront area!

The Frederick and Nellie Harter House

The craftsmanship skills of the current owners are bringing new life to this 1880 home. It is a work in progress with future plans still to come. Enjoy the view of North Beach and Lake Michigan from this home!

The Harvey W. Knoepke House

This home represents the extensive history of the neighborhood including: ethnic communities, working families, rental property, and long term ownership. The beautiful inviting, full-width porch provides a view every home owner could envy.

The William S. and Helen C. Paul House

This home, back to its origin, was intended to be a two-family. Current owners utilized the full house to raise their family. The history here reminds us that modifications to homes are part of each home's unique story.

Racine Water Utilities

This stately building is home to the Water Utilities. You will see how the additions merge to create a single harmonious building that serves our community. You will learn about the water purification and have opportunity to view historical collections on display.

Racine Yacht Club

For 100 years the Yacht Club organization has been welcoming and supporting its members and the community. We thank them for welcoming our tour guests to reflect on the recreational opportunity Lake Michigan provides.

Racine's Boat Building History Display by Jim Mercier

Reflections about *Life Along the Lake* cannot be complete without recognition of Racine's successful and extensive commercial history. This display will be at the Wind Point Lighthouse in the Village Hall.

Photographs by Charles Vallone

Ticket Table Sites

To pick up wristbands or buy tickets, visit any of these four ticket tables:

- Wind Point Lighthouse Caretakers Residence, 4725 Lighthouse Drive
- North Bay Village Hall, 3615 Hennepin Place
- North Beach Park,1500 Michigan Blvd. area
- Racine Water Utilities, 100 Hubbard Street

Note that tour booklets with insightful information about the tour sites and a map will be available on the day of the tour and may also be picked up at the November and December membership meetings. Members not able to attend the tour or our fall meetings can receive their free tour book by leaving a telephone message with clearly spoken name and mailing address at **262-634 5748**, or make your request by email to **preservationracine@gmail.org**. We appreciate your working with us transitioning to this new process as we reduce our mailing and printing cost and manage your membership dollars efficiently.

Please remember that the sites to be visited include private homes, so be aware that there will be steps: anyone with mobility concerns should make personal choices in accordance.

We take this opportunity to draw attention to our wonderful artists who have photographed, sketched, and illustrated the locations: George Mangold, Charles Vallone, and Don Vander Leest. We extend our warmest thanks and appreciation.

Volunteer as a Docent!

We are always delighted to hear from those who would like to be docents for the tour! If you are interested in contributing in this way, please leave a message at **262-634 5748** or email **preservationracine@gmail.org**.

We are deeply appreciative of the site owners, the members of Preservation Racine and the many community members, organizations and businesses who come together to make this day a successful and delightful experience for our tour guests.

realracine
America's Kringle Capital

Preservation Racine Gets Boost for Tour Publicity

Real Racine is excited about the upcoming Tour of Historic Places on Sunday, September 27, and has made a grant to help introduce the tour to more people outside Racine County and in Illinois. The tour is taking place during the Triple Treat Weekend: on Friday, September 25, there are tours of the Johnson Wax Frank Lloyd Wright Buildings; on Saturday, September 26, there is the largest party around: the Party on the Pavement in downtown Racine; and on Sunday, September 27, there is Preservation Racine's Tour of Historic Places (*Life Along the Lake*). These and other September events can be found in the free Real Racine magazine.

Visit our website:
www.preservationracine.org
for tour information

Recent Archive Gifts

Long time Preservation Racine members and volunteers, Carolyn and Jim Chaplin are relocating to Florida. Carolyn once chaired Preservation Racine's Tour of Historic Places. In preparation for their move and planned downsizing, the Chaplins have contributed books and publications they have collected over the years to Preservation Racine's Archive. Of note are two books written by Robert D. Long, the Architectural Conservationist hired by the City of Racine, who served on Racine's Landmarks Preservation Commission. In 1982 he wrote *Racine: A Guide to Architectural Styles* and a booklet, *Racine's Historic Firehouses*. Another publication, *Maintaining and Renewing Your Old House,* produced with the help of Landmarks Preservation Commission and Preservation Racine is a guide for people to use in restoring and repairing their historic houses. Included in her gift is: *Lucas Bradley: Carpenter, Builder, Architect* by Helen Patton, *Thirty-Two Picture Postcards of Old Racine* published by Preservation Racine, and *Bottled in Racine* by Gerald Karwowski. A rare copy of a wooden covered book (c.1893) illustrating period commercial and residential buildings in Racine was part of their donation. Thank you, Carolyn and Jim, for remembering Preservation Racine. We wish you happiness in your new home.

Another donor to our research collection to be recognized is Pat Murphy. She has been an on-going benefactor to Preservation Racine's historic files. Being a charter member of Preservation Racine, a past president of both Preservation Racine and Landmarks Commission, and a life time citizen of Racine, she has accumulated a wealth of Racine ephemera. Much of this material was gathered by her father, Grover Miller. Grover was a life time Racine resident, once accepting a Century Family Certificate in honor of his family. As Pat scours her boxes of history, she generously sends pictures, articles, and periodicals to the archive committee. These gifts enrich our collection of Racine history and are a source for research and writing.

Vivian Merlo

Coming Up

Preservation Racine Tour of Historic Places
Sunday, September 27, 2015, noon to 5:30 p. m.

Preservation Racine Membership Meeting
Monday, November 2, 2015, 7:00 p. m.
George's Tavern - 1201 North Main Street
Norm Seeger will talk about map making in Racine

Preservation Racine Membership Meeting
Monday, December 7, 2015, 7:00 p. m.
Meeting Room in East Park Towers
111 Main Street
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt (Jessica Michna) will pay us a visit

Starving Artist Fair

Preservation Racine once again had a booth at the Starving Artists Fair in East Park on Sunday, August 2. This is the event where the sites for Preservation Racine's annual Tour of Historic Places are officially announced. Jim and Cherry Wardrip, Nat Cycenas, Marcia Pfost, Gerald and Nancy Ritter, Jim Mercier, Nancy Sullivan, Carol Gianforte, Patricia Simonson, Katy Strande and Don and Bev Schumacher volunteered to set up, dismantle, man the booth and greet our guests. George Mangold designed and produced the tour poster, incorporating Charles Vallone's photographs of the ten tour sites. Jim Wardrip produced a clever handout showing the Green Bay Packers' Schedule and noting that the team is not playing a game on tour day. This poster is now on display in the window of the Downtown Racine Corporation. Thank you to all of our volunteers.

RACINE PUBLIC LIBRARY

JOIN US ON MEMORY LANE!

CAROL BUROW GIANFORTE AND JIM MERCIER PRESENT

REMEMBERING RACINE'S OLD NEIGHBORHOOD GROCERY STORES

John, Sarah, and son Joe in the Gianforte Grocery Store at 1403 Superior Street

September 22, 2015 at 6:00 pm

THE EVENING WILL FEATURE

A reading of Carol's Journal Times story **"The Store: Remembering Racine's Neighborhood Stores"** in which she describes Willie Quadracci's Albert Street store in the 1950s.

Jim will present his extensive Racine grocery store collections, including the "give-aways" that grocers gave to their best customers, such as plates, thermometers, and old calendars.

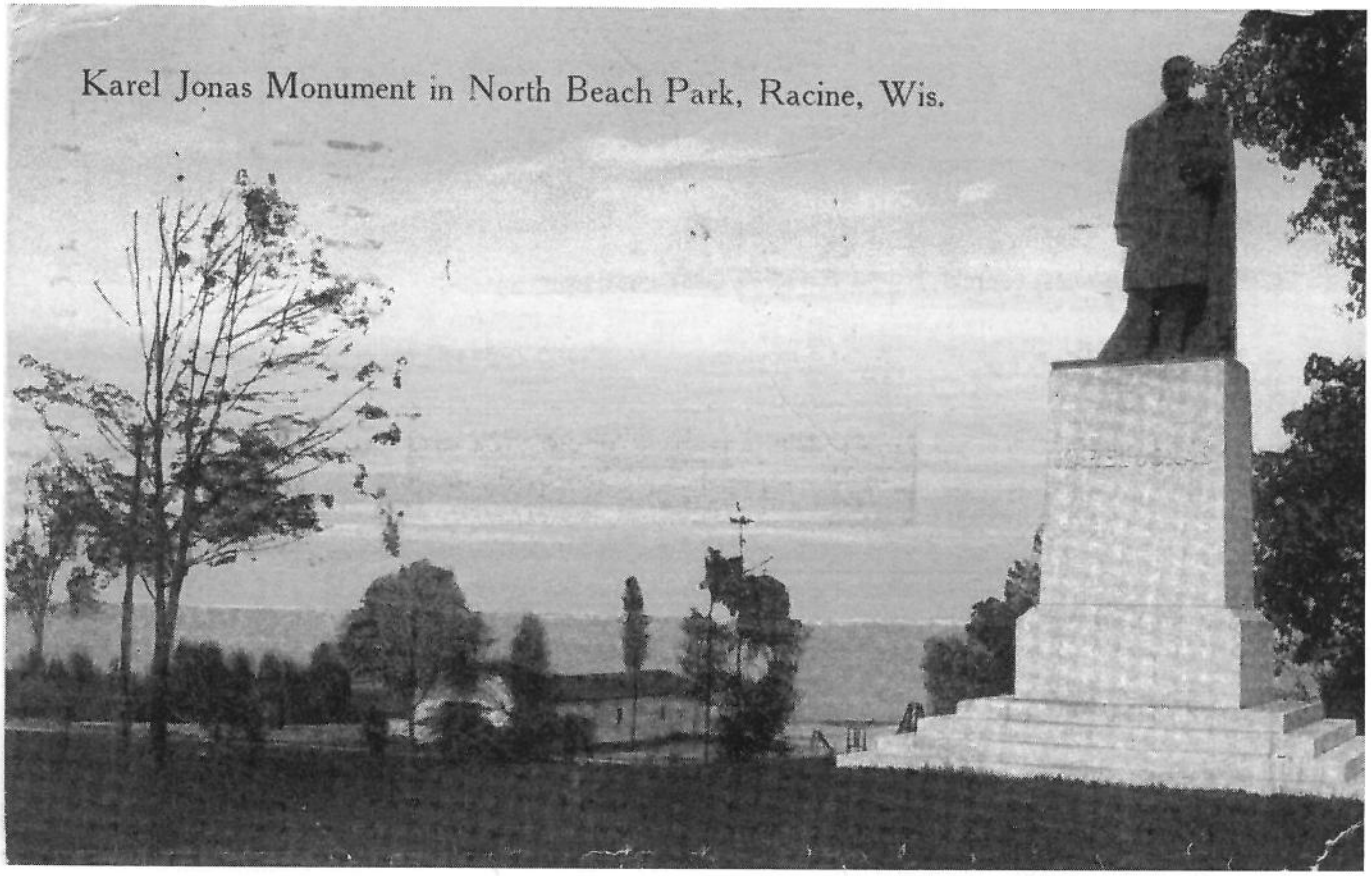
Presenter Info

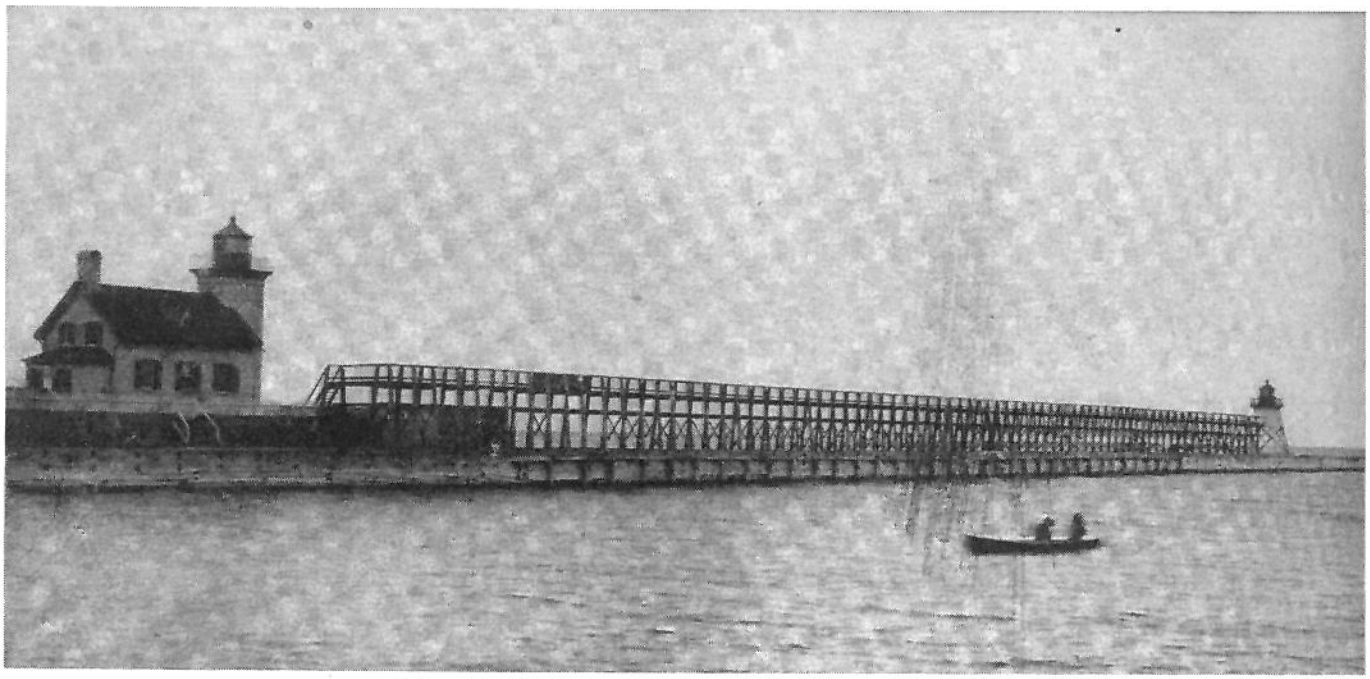
Carol is a contributor of nostalgic Racine stories to the Journal Times and is the author of ***My Heart Leads me Home— A Daughter's Memoir***

Jim is a renowned collector of Racine memorabilia.

Start collecting your own memories and photos to share!

MEMORIES FROM DESCENDENTS OF THOSE WHO ONCED OWNED THE STORES WILL BE SHARED





Lighthouse and Pier, Racine, Wisc,
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PRESERVATION RACINE, INC.

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Vice President	Jim Wardrip
Secretary	Nat Cycenas
Treasurer	Charles Rice
Historian	Sharon Baldukas

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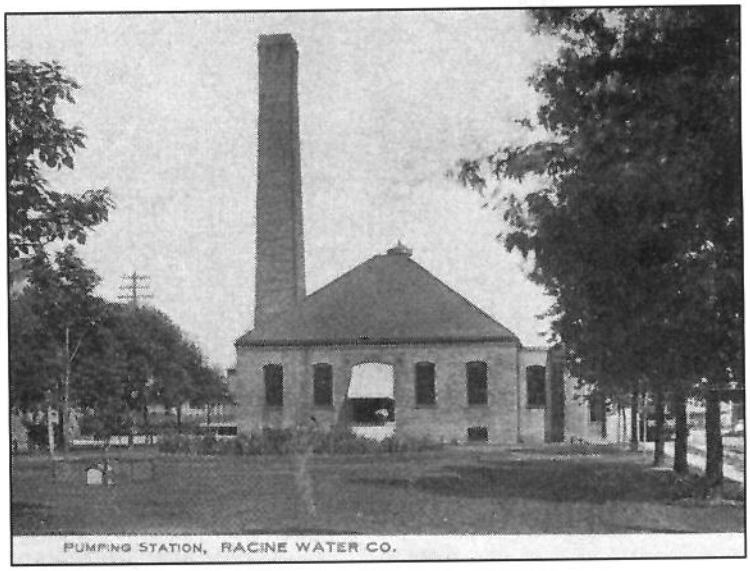
PUMPING STATION, RACINE WATER CO.