

Alcona Historical Society

P.O. Box 174, Harrisville MI 48740

Spring 2025



Sturgeon Point Lighthouse



Bailey School House



Lincoln Train Depot

President's Letter

Greetings, Happy Spring?? Time flies so fast that before you know it, we will be opening our museums for the 2025 season.

Our 2024 season was quite successful. We were open 56 days at Sturgeon Point/Bailey School with almost 8,000 visitors (not including beach goers and rock hunters) with over 2,400 climbing the tower. We had an increase of income at the gift shop and the tower climb. The staff and volunteers greeted visitors and shared their enthusiasm for history. We hosted the Family Fun Day in August. Over 300 people attended the day long event. We also sponsored the Bay to Beacon half marathon again this year. It continues to grow.

Lincoln Depot was open on Saturdays for July and August. We also participated in the Lincoln Car Show and the Chili Cookoff. Lots of visitors took advantage of the depot being open.

The Friends of the Harrisville Depot obtained their own non profit status last fall. The deed was transferred to them. Good luck to them as they move forward with the restoration of that historic gem.

Overall, in all Society activities and events, we had over 800 hours of volunteer time. Please note our thank you to our dedicated members who volunteer their time. We couldn't do it without you.

This coming season we will continue to work on updating our exhibits in the Sturgeon Point keeper's quarters and Lincoln Depot. At Sturgeon Point we plan on adding an outdoor exhibit showing where the SP Life Saving Station was. We hope to complete the project in 2026 and celebrate the 150th anniversary of the station. We participated in the Northeast Michigan Community Foundation – Giving Tuesday in November. The donations collected will go toward the new exhibits.

A special exhibit celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Pittsburgh Pirates World Series will be featured at Sturgeon Point this summer. The reason we celebrate you may ask - Hazen 'KiKi' Cuyler, local hometown boy, born at Sturgeon Point hit the series winning double for the Pirates. His story will be on exhibit all summer in the keeper's quarters.

We are also in the very beginning stages of researching Centennial Farms in Alcona County. Please take a look at the information found in this newsletter.

Note the calendar of events in this newsletter. We have three more Cabin Fever lectures coming this spring. If you are on Facebook, we hope to stream them on the Alcona Historical Society's page, on Facebook Live. Last week's lecture had 47 people in attendance and over 100 viewed it on Facebook.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our museums or events this year. So thankful for all of our members.

Sincerely, Kristin Benghauser

Thank You To Our Volunteers

AHS volunteers were hard at work throughout the Summer of 2024 and into the Fall. Volunteers planned and managed events; raised funds, paid bills, kept the books; led and staffed activities on Lighthouse Day; baked goods for the bake sale and Bay to Beacon runners; set up and took down canopies, tables and chairs; worked at the lighthouse, schoolhouse, gift shop, and depot to provide historical information and a memorable experience for thousands of visitors; stocked and inventoried the gift shop and sold merchandise; researched history and created exhibits and signs; maintained the website and social media presence; kept the interior of the buildings organized, clean and safe; hosted weddings and a visitation from ghost seekers; planted flowers, cleared brush, cut grass, whacked weeds and did all that was necessary to maintain the grounds and buildings.

It was a busy, fun, and successful season but all good things come to an end and after closing Sturgeon Point's buildings to visitors at the end of September, after 56 days of being open, a crew of volunteers assembled in the Fall to prepare the buildings and grounds for Winter closure. Our success in 2024 was because of the commitment, effort, excellence, and dedication of every volunteer who helped out. Everyone's contribution makes a difference. **Thank you all!**

The Board of Directors would like to recognize the extra effort and time on the part of volunteers **Theresa Rocklin** and **Ann Gracy** who stepped up to take on the job of grounds maintenance for much of this year, and by volunteer **Joan Senchuk** for contributions of time and expertise in sales and management of the gift shop. Thank you also to **Ken Hubbard** for keeping our membership list up to date and sending out our communications to members.

Thank you Board of Directors members John Boufford, Veryl Davis, Mary Hamather, Carol Mowitz, Dianna Rigato, Lynn VanderLinde, Bruce Welther, and Sue Welther for continued dedication to the mission of the AHS and for doing the work to plan and manage all things necessary to do what we do.

In Memoriam

Two of our loyal members passed away this January. Beverly Niedermiller, age 93; and Marian Wittenberg, age 94 were very active in the Society some years back. Both were so knowledgeable and added so much to the Society.

Calendar of Events

Cabin Fever lectures – see flyer in newsletter for more information

• **Tuesday, March 25th** - 2:00 at Curtis Township Library, Glennie

• **Thursday, April 3rd** – 6:00 at Alcona County Library, Harrisville branch

• **Thursday, May 15th** 5:00 at Alcona Township Hall, Black River

• **Friday, May 23rd** - **Opening day at Sturgeon Point State Park - Season 2025**

• **Saturday, August 2nd** – Family Fun Day at Sturgeon Point – 11 – 4.

• **Saturday, August 16th** – Bay to Beacon Half Marathon

Centennial Farms

As farming has been a huge part of the history of Alcona County (coming after commercial fishing and lumbering), Alcona Historical Society would like to begin gathering historical information on local family farms. We have contacted the Historical Society of Michigan who operates the Michigan Centennial Farm certification program and received a list of farms. What we need now are people who might have an interest or knowledge in this topic and are willing to do research and collect data. If this is something that would be of interest to you please contact us. Our hope is to eventually share this information with others, possibly at the County Fair and beyond.



Lincoln
Depot
Quilt
winner
Beverly
Slayden
with quilt

Now is the time to send in your 2025 membership dues.

Your past support and membership indicates that you share the Society's goals and objectives in preserving and protecting the historical resources in Alcona County.

We truly appreciate your involvement, whether it is your membership or donations, your willingness to volunteer at one of the Society's historical sites, attending one of our events, or providing historical items or information. All of these activities allow the Alcona Historical Society to continue to grow.

Please complete the membership form below and send it with your check to Alcona Historical Society, P.O. Box 174, Harrisville, MI 48740. If you have any questions regarding membership, please do not hesitate to contact Kristin at (989) 471-2088 or by email at ahs@alconahistoricalsociety.com.

Thank you so much for being a part of Alcona Historical Society and supporting the work we do

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number (_____) _____

Email address _____

I do not have an email address. Please mail my newsletter. _____

TYPE OF MEMBERSHIP:

Individual - \$20 _____ Family - \$35 _____ Sponsor - \$55 _____

I would like to pay more than one year - _____

Please contact me so that I may learn more about volunteer opportunities _____

Kristin Benghauser, AHS Membership Chair · P.O. Box 174, Harrisville MI 48740

Cabin Fever Lecture Series 2025

Tuesday, March 25, 2:00 p.m., Curtis Township Library, Glennie. Back by popular demand! “Made in the Mitten: Savoring Michigan’s Rich Agricultural & Foodie History (with food samples).” It’s amazing how many Michigan products are in the “top five” of the United States. Come hungry, and feast on Michigan deliciousness. Dianna Stampfler is a professional writer, broadcaster and public speaker. Her programs are lively and upbeat, providing an entertaining spin on historical elements of Michigan’s past, blended with pieces of the present, with an emphasis on preserving for the future. This Cabin Fever program is also supported by the Friends of Curtis Township Library.

Thursday, April 3, 6:00 p.m., Alcona County Library, Harrisville. “Ghost of the 1913 Storm: Discovery of the Steamer Hydrus,” by David Trotter. Since the Great Storm of 1913, the 436-foot steamship Hydrus had been lost in Lake Huron. It sank, most likely on Nov. 9 of that year, during a storm so ferocious it has been called the “White Hurricane.” This recently discovered ship is the last and greatest loss (on the U.S. side) from that Great Storm. David Trotter has been involved in Great Lakes Shipwrecks —searching, diving, exploring and documenting new discoveries for 40+ years. The solving of “history’s mysteries” has made significant contributions to the story of our Great Lakes and provided exploration opportunities for sport and technical divers to enjoy.

Thursday, May 15, 6:00 p.m., Alcona Township Hall, Black River. It’s the 50th Anniversary of the sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald! Our favorite presenter, Ric Mixer, will present photo images, past and present, and rare underwater footage from his visit to the Fitz in 1994. Ric Mixer was awarded for 20 years of maritime preservation by the Association of Great Lakes Maritime History. He has produced over 30 shows on local history for PBS and the Outdoor Channel and has appeared on the History and Discovery Channel as a shipwreck expert. Energetic and animated, he has changed the way lecturers share history. Join us for a light meal and a brief annual meeting of the Alcona Historical Society, highlighting our plans for a great 2025 summer season, followed by this amazing program!

ALL PROGRAMS ARE FREE OF CHARGE

and provided by the Alcona Historical Society and the Alcona County Library.

www.alconahistoricalsociety.com



Thank You, Volunteers!

We appreciate your contributions
to our community.

The Alcona Reader

Stories and history of Alcona County written by those who lived it!

Available at Amazon.com

(ISBN 978-1726301725).

Stories by local authors R.E. Prescott, Doris Gauthier, Hazel Phetteplace, Annette Ludwig, Marie Schelley, Elrita Sterling, Charles Reynolds, Bill Kahn, Annie Anderson and many, many more.

Comments and Reviews:

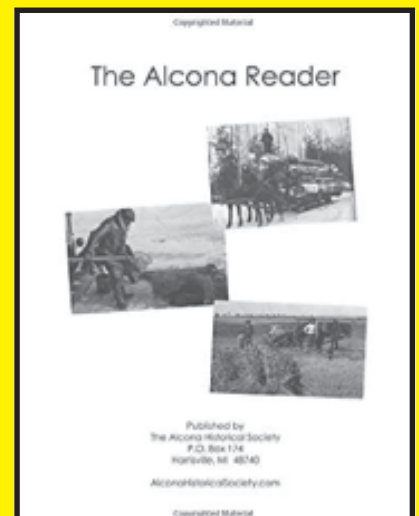
“I read it cover to cover in one sitting. Couldn’t put it down.”

“Every county would be lucky to have a book like this”

“Lots of laughter, and a few tears.....”

“Alcona history comes alive with these stories.”

“A snapshot of the hardships and joys of the early settlers.”



Sturgeon Point to celebrate KiKi Cuyler this season

The Alcona Historical Society will celebrate the life of Hazen “KiKi” Cuyler this year with a photos displaying highlights of his life. 2025 is the 100 anniversary of Cuyler’s World Series winning hit against the Washington Senators.

Cuyler coming off a stellar rookie season in 1924 hitting .354 with 9 home runs and 85 RBIs. 1925 would be the pinnacle of his career, hitting .357 with 18 home runs, driving in 102 runs and stealing 41 bases, ending with his only World Series ring.

The 1925 World Series is the most controversial in baseball history. The series pitted the defending champions Washington Senators against Cuyler’s Pittsburgh Pirates the series would go 7 games with Washington sending future Baseball Hall of Famer Walter “The Big Train” Johnson to the mound for games 1, 3 and 7.

The Senators built up a 3–1 Series lead. After Pittsburgh won the next two games, Johnson again took the mound for Game 7, and carried a 6–4 lead into the bottom of the seventh inning. But errors by shortstop Roger Peckinpaugh in both the seventh and eighth innings led to four unearned runs, and the Pirates become the first team in a best-of-seven Series to overcome a 3–1 Series deficit to win the championship. Peckinpaugh, the Senators' regular shortstop and the 1925 American League Most Valuable Player, had a tough Series in the field, committing a record eight errors.

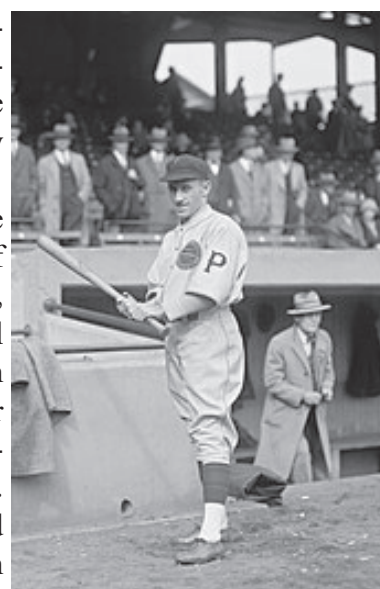
Playing conditions were of no help. The 1925 Series was postponed twice due to poor weather, and Game 7 was played in what soon became a steady downpour, described as “probably the worst conditions ever for a World Series game.” Senators outfielder Goose Goslin reported that the fog prevented him from clearly seeing the infield during the last three innings of the game, and claimed that the Series-winning hit was actually a foul ball.

A memorable play occurred during the eighth inning of Game 3. The Senators' Sam Rice ran after an Earl Smith line drive hit into right center field. Rice made a diving “catch” into the temporary stands, but did not emerge with the ball for approximately 15 seconds. The Pirates contested the play, saying a fan probably stuffed the ball into Rice's glove. The call stood and Rice parried questions about the incident for the rest of his life—never explicitly saying whether he had or had not really made the catch. His typical answer was always “The umpire said I caught it.”

Hazen Shirley Cuyler was born on August 30, 1898 to George and Anna (Shirley) Cuyler of Sturgeon Point where his father was a member of the U.S. Life Saving Crew. Hazen moved with his family to Harrisville in 1907.

Hazen attended Harrisville School and graduated valedictorian of the five-person class on May 30, 1917.

According to the February 16, 1950 issue of the Alcona County Review, “Hazen’s love for baseball grew from childhood when he played with neighbor children on the sandlot diamond at Sturgeon Point. His high school days found him an important figure on the home baseball and basketball teams. The guidance of his father, who was



Cuyler during the 1925 season

a sports enthusiast, during his early years helped greatly in his later achievements.” He played in county league teams and with Alpena teams during his early years.

Following graduation, he attended West Point Academy during the Great War (World War I). When he returned home Hazen married his high school sweetheart, Bertha Kelly, the daughter of Arthur and Clennie Kelly of Harrisville, on January 18, 1918. They moved to Flint, Mich. for some time where Hazen worked for Buick. While in Flint, after World War I, Hazen started playing semi-pro baseball and also starred while playing for the Buick Big Red Basketball team.

On June 20, 1920 he signed with the Bay City Club of the Michigan-Ontario Baseball League. A scout from the Pittsburgh Pirates spotted him at a game in Saginaw, Mich. in August 1921 and paid \$3,000 for his release to the Pirates. This was his entry into big league baseball. During his four seasons in the minors, the right-handed batter and thrower had three short trials with the Pirates in 1921, ‘22 and ‘23. He finished the 1924 season with one of the finest rookie years in baseball. He finished fourth in batting with a .354 average and 32 stolen bases. In 1925 Hazen’s hitting and running skills helped the Pirates win the pennant and the 1925 World Series after defeating the Washington Senators in seven games. He led the National League in 1925 with 26 triples.

The season of 1926 was a tough one for Hazen. He and Donnie Bush, manager of the Pirates, began to have problems and Bush benched Hazen during the 1927 World

Continued on Page 5

Continued from page 4

Series against the New York Yankees (led by Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Tony Lazzerie). Less than two months later he joined the Chicago Cubs. (The Pirates did not see a World Series for the next 33 years.) Hazen's batting average, which had dipped below .300 for two years, improved in 1929 to .360. That fall he finally played in a World Series against the Philadelphia Athletics. The Cubs lost to the Athletics in five games.

Hazen was called "Cuy" by his school teammates. It was while winning the MVP title of the Southern Association with Nashville in 1923 that he acquired the euphonious "Kiki" nickname. Fans heard the players shout for him to take the ball when he rushed in on a short fly. The short-stop would yell, "Cuy," and the second baseman would echo the call. In the pressbox the writers turned this into "Kiki." Older fans wince to hear him called "Keekee."

Hazen, who had curly hair and hazel eyes, is described as a hard-swinging batter who ran bases with abandon. He was a tough competitor, but was a gentleman who did not drink or smoke.

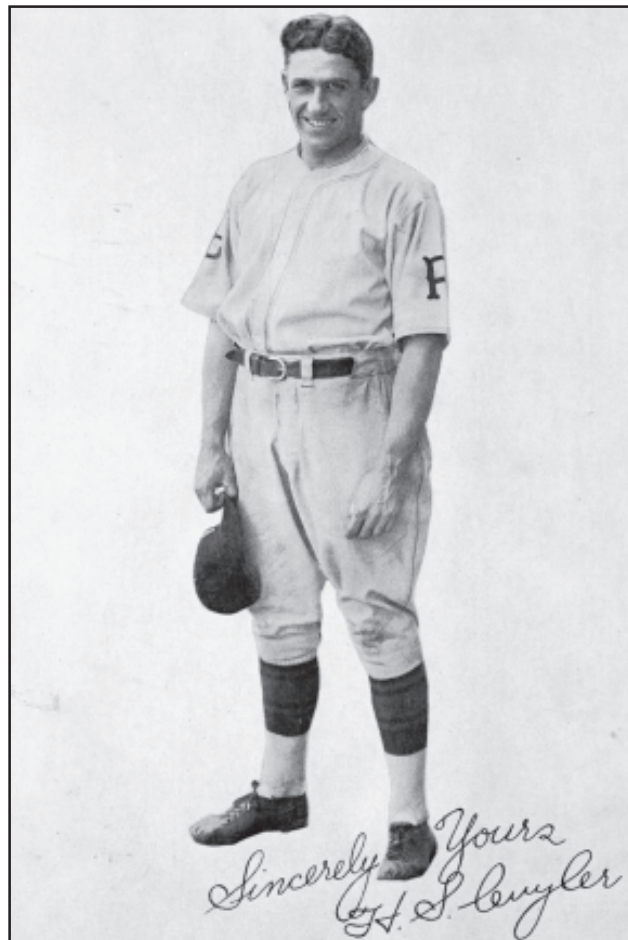
In 1929 Hazen and his wife, Bertha, purchased a home in Harrisville (which is still in the family). Over the years they had two children, Harold "Butch" and Kelly June.

His daughter, Kelly Kruttlin, remembers her father as being very ambitious and family oriented. "He liked to fix things and work about the house," Kelly said. "He looked after his parents and my mother's parents. He was the same all of the time-very outgoing and had a nice personality. He believed in work. He liked everybody."

Hazen was very active in the community. He was a founding member of the Harrisville Goodfellows-a group that started out as the "Buck Club" in the 1930s. Hazen and other members would, according to E. W. "Bub" Chapelle, collect dollars from people on Main Street to use to give children a better Christmas.

He was a founding member of the Harrisville Lions Club, where "No job was ever assigned to him by the club president that he didn't give forth with his best," Chapelle wrote after his death. "He was the backbone of the Lions Club Minstrel Show which has been successfully put on for the last eight years."

He was also a charter member of the Alcona County Sportsmen's Club and an active member of the Alpena Council, Knights of Columbus and the St. Anne Holy Name Society in Harrisville. Many a civic meeting was held at the Cuyler household when Hazen was home between seasons.



Cuyler early in his career.

Kelly said her father loved to sing and was a member of St. Anne Catholic Church choir for many years. "He was very religious," Kelly said. "And very strict. He didn't drink or smoke. He never missed a day of church. My mother used to say that he would walk 12 miles in a snow-storm to get to church."

Hazen's family traveled with him when he played baseball. Every spring they would go to the spring training complex and live with the other ballplayers and their families. Then they rented homes in Pittsburgh, Chicago, Atlanta and Chattanooga -- depending on which team he was playing for.

In 1932 a broken foot sidelined Hazen and eventually ended his playing career. He moved into coaching. In 1939, according to the Alcona County Review's Feb. 16, 1950 issue, "(Hazen) took over the management of the Chattanooga Lookouts and led the team to their first pennant in years. From 1944 to 1948 he managed the Atlanta Crackers of the Southern Association and won two final series pennants for the capital city team."

"During the past year he was coach of the Boston Red Sox of the American League, and had signed his 1950

Continued from page 5

contract to continue as coach for that club. He was to leave February 20 for spring training in Florida. The Red Sox were top league players last season and lost a chance for World Series play to New York in the last game of league play," according to Chapelle.

Hazen was ice fishing when he suffered a heart attack on February 2, 1950. While recovering at home he caught pneumonia and was recovering from that when he had a second heart attack. He was taken to Ann Arbor, Mich. for treatment and died at the hospital at age 50.

"We know of no one that was more proud of his home and family than Ki was," Chapelle wrote in the February 16, 1950 obituary. "It seemed that every year when he would return at the end of the baseball season, he would start remodeling or landscaping the grounds."

He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y. in 1968. Some of his career stats are: .321 lifetime batting average, 2,299 hits and 328 stolen bases. He is considered one of the greatest outfielders of the game.



The ball field where it all started for Ki Cuyler. In the shadow of Sturgeon Point Lighthouse and Lifesaving Station.

Address Service Requested

**Alcona Historical Society
P.O. Box 174
Harrisville, MI 47840**

**Stamp
Here**