

NOVEMBER 2021

PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND PRESENT



# TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEATURED ARTICLE:

**I Remember When.... by Julius Petertyl**

The Traverse Area Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly.  
The four issues are published February, May, August, and November.

## BOARD MEMBERS

Stephen Siciliano

- *President*

Brian McCall

- *Vice President*

Jenny Loup

- *Secretary*

Sarah Bowers

- *Treasurer*

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Jim Warner

Larry Hains

Peg Siciliano

Sharon Jennings

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- **From President Siciliano's Desk**
  - *Working Around the Current Health Crisis*
- **From the Desks' of Our Board Members & Much More!**

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## FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK

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**W**e had two programs since our last newsletter. At our September program, Peg Siciliano presented on “Explore the Secrets and Mysteries of Dating Historic Photographs.” She shared that some of the secrets of dating photographs. She noted that there are clues in the backgrounds of photos that can help to date it. These include the landscapes, buildings, business signs, automobiles and even theatre marquees. Second, photos can be dated by the fashions of people in the picture. Also, researching the photographers and noting the photographic methods used can also help to date the photos. Peg noted that it is important to use multiple clues to assure the best dating for the photograph.



What clues could you use to date this photograph? Listen to the program to find out the answer! If you would like to view the entire program, our partners at the Traverse Area District Library have recorded it. The link for the September program is found at

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4uvBXke-CI>**

At our October program, we held our annual meeting. It began with our Keynote Presentation. Ninth graders Elyse Heffner and Veronika Caughran presented their Michigan History Day project on "George Washington's Farewell Address." Their PowerPoint presentation described the process they used to research their project, the multiple competitions that resulted in the award winning presentation at the national level, and what they learned from their research. They answered member questions and concluded by noting that the Farewell Address was particularly relevant today with the current partisan situation.

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**FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONTINUED**

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A picture of their tri-panel project is provided to the right.

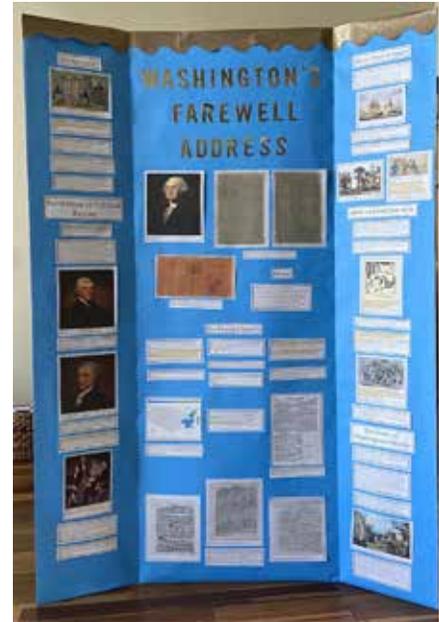
This presentation was followed by my State of the Society Report. I shared that thanks to the Library we have been able to resume our monthly programs and have them recorded and placed on the Library and Society websites. I also noted the Dr. Emily Modrall's grant project on developing signage for the Native American historical trail markers, known as the "Old Indian Trail" markers in Traverse City. The success of her work has been expanded to include partners at three Leelanau County schools through a grant from the Native American Heritage Fund.

I provided a financial report provided by our Treasurer Matt Groleau. We then had an open discussion with our attending members about the society's directions and concluded with the election of Board of Directors. I am happy to announce that Larry Hains and I were reelected, and Sarah Bowers was elected to the board.

In other board news, Matt Groleau has decided to leave the board. The Society is grateful for his service on the board and his hard work as board treasurer. I am glad to report, he will continue to be active in the society serving in the role of an assistant treasurer going forward.

In our continuing monitoring of the Con Foster Collection, we have been in regular communication with Commissioner Roger Putnam who has been a strong advocate for the proper care of the collection. We regret he will be leaving the commission in November. However, he spoken with the City Manager and Mr. Colburn has asked him if he would stay engaged in helping to determine the course of action for the collection, including partial display of pertinent artifacts. We are grateful that Commissioner Putnam has agree to do so, as long as my health permits.

Finally, we were able to join our partners, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, on October 2nd for their Oakwood GAR Plot 24I Dedications & Last Union Veteran Buried in Grand Traverse County Ceremony. Our Society financially contributed to gravestones for three of these Union veterans and for the Last Union Veteran plaque.



**FROM PROGRAM AND EVENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR LOUP'S DESK**

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The autumn tours have concluded for the season. These included our downtown tours, our regular cemetery tours and our cemetery tours with a Halloween twist. The downtown tours were lightly attended, and we may look to different venues next year. Our cemetery tours continue to be successful, though we believe some decline in attendance may be due to the pandemic. Our most recent tours had about a dozen attendees at each tour.

Our November monthly program will be presented by Marty MacLeod and entitled "Old Towne and Traverse City's old South Side." It will be held in person at the McGuire Room of the Traverse Area District Library on November 21st, 2:00-3:30 pm. It will also be available online and on the Zoom platform. The event link is provided here at

**<https://www.tadl.org/event/traverse-area-historical-society-4/>**

The program will be all about Old Towne—or, more correctly—all about the old South Side. Old Towne Neighborhood Association President and TAHS member Marty MacLeod has drawn from the research for her forthcoming book and will "show and tell" the story of this vibrant Traverse City neighborhood. Her accounts and research span from 1865, when the Union Street bridge first spanned the Boardman River, to 1965, when the area first became known as Old Towne. You won't want to miss it!

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**FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK**

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As of November 1, 2021, our membership count is 153. We are happy to welcome five new members who have recently joined our group. These include David and Lisa Smith, Andrew Marshall, Lisa McKenna and Peter Kobs. It's always so great to have more help and support as we work to keep our history alive.

It was also nice to see some of our members at our annual meeting at TADL in October. We have missed being together and sharing our love of local history. We hope to see even more of you at our next program in November. As always, a big THANK YOU to everyone who supports us and helps us in our endeavors.

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## FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK

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As your Historical Society progresses through the 2021 calendar year, we are happy to communicate that we continue to be in a sound financial condition and are operating according to plan.

Over the past year we have provided financial support to students and the Library. Here is the annual report of how we have used our funding to advance our mission:

\$1,840	(4) Petertyl Interns
\$ 940	Michigan History Day student support
\$1,717	Goodale Hitchcock farmstead project
\$1,200	TADL Archives Support
\$1,250	TADL Archiving Project (50%)
\$10,000	TADL Archives shelving expansion project

\$16,947 Total

We have also completed the work to create our 2022 Society Budget. This was presented at the annual meeting. We confirmed the budget at our November board meeting. The budget will be available on the Society website under

**<https://traversehistory.org/about/board-meetings-minutes-and-agendas/>**

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## NEWS ON A NEW PROJECT HIGHLIGHTING LOCAL NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY

**By Emily Modrall**

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The initiative to organize and install signs dedicated to this area's Anishinaabe (indigenous) history continues. Last month, an architect/artist visited Traverse City and Leelanau County to begin the process of designing signs to mark locations significant to Anishinaabe history and tradition. Other consultants and contributors continue the process of deciding where signs should be placed, and what the signs should say. The new signage will be bilingual, and will, we hope, deepen our community's understanding and appreciation of the long Anishinaabe history here.

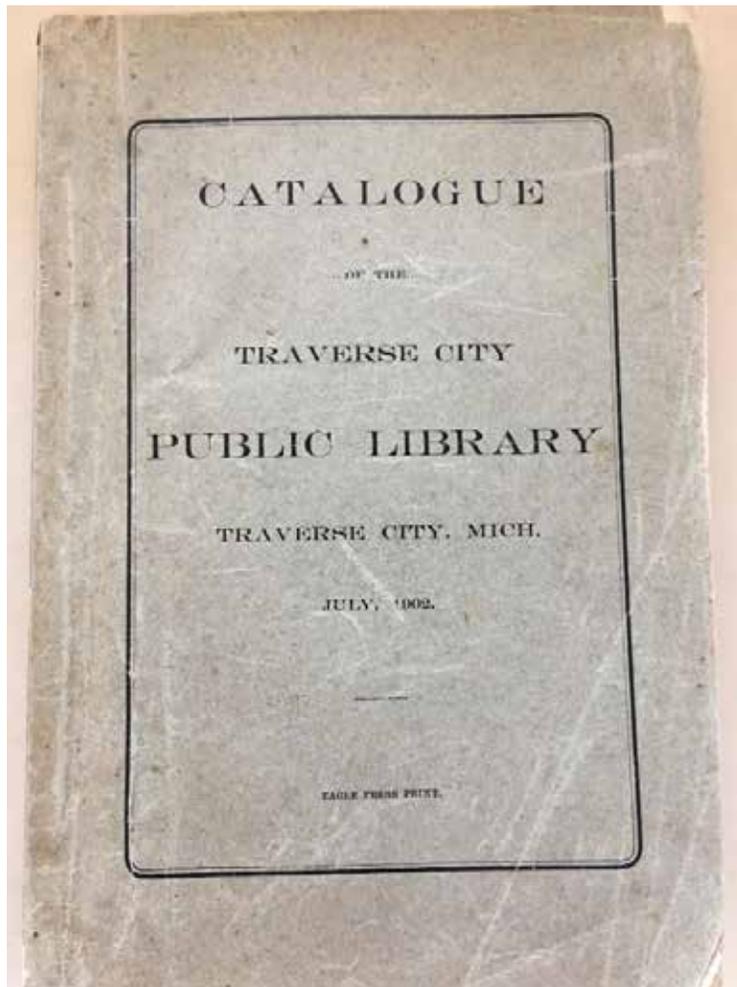
Please get in touch with Emily Modrall with any questions or comments about this project: **[emily.modrall@gmail.com](mailto:emily.modrall@gmail.com)**.

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**NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY**  
**By Michele Howard, TADL Director**

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Like much of the world, the Local History Collection is dealing with supply chain issues to get our new shelving. The shelves are supposed to ship in November, but we are not sure when that means they will arrive and be installed. While we wait, we continue to organize and re-box materials. Robin Stanley has been making great progress with some of our backlogs and discovering some previous unknown items like a paper catalog from the Traverse City Public Library dated 1902. (See the picture below.)



I wish I had more to report but we are gearing up for some exciting times in 2022!

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## I REMEMBER WHEN....

### By Julius Petertyl

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**O**ur newsletter for the next year will bring you four columns written by our wonderful late benefactor and community historian Julius Petertyl. Enjoy his columns again. This column shares his thoughts of summer in Traverse City in the early 1900s

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I remember when I had a friend who tells ghosts and goblins on Halloween eve that he would like his 'trick'. What he gets most of the time is a wide eyed look of disbelief. Neighborhoods in the early 1900s were filled with tricks and there was no such thing as treats!

Although families carved pumpkins and placed them in windows, Halloween was a rough night! Porches were a popular target for pranksters. Assorted garbage was sometimes hoisted onto them, their stairs were pulled away or slobbered with tar or axle grease. Outhouse seats also received a coating of this devilish goo or the entire outhouse was toppled over. Wooden fences were knocked over and their gates lost their hinges. Wagons and buggies were removed from their yards and left two or three blocks away.

Tic-tacs were made in anticipation of this night. This instrument was made by cutting large notches on a wooden spool, wrapping the spool with several lengths of string, and attaching a clothespin to the strings end. A long nail was then placed in the whole of the spool. The nail was held as the spool was very quietly placed on a window pane. The string was pulled very quickly, and the notched ends would hit the window pane in rapid fire succession. Sounds pretty tame. Having had a demonstration of this contraption, I am certain it would give any half absorbed reader quite a start on a quiet night. (Occasionally the window would actually break!)

Windows were soaped or 'waxed' to extremes. It was not unusual to see downtown store windows completely clouded with this Halloween trick.

In those days children had an 8:00 PM city enforced curfew period the Central School bell announced this time nightly and officer Grayson would patrol the streets. However, life in the mills and factories was tough. Parents tried to keep control, but fathers were often in bed by 8 to be up at 5:00 AM. It is no surprise that these young people were often called 'Hellers'!

One Halloween night in 1908 was particularly eventful evidently a group of very ambitious hellers chose a farm wagon from the yard of Jonathan Johnson at 412 W. 8th St. as their target. They quietly removed it from its yard and pushed it to Central School. There, it was painstakingly disassembled while ropes and pulleys were positioned on the third floor roof of the building. The next morning teachers and students were amazed to see a completely assembled farm wagon balanced on the peak of Central School.

There is no doubt that events on Halloween night in the early 1900s were very scary. I will definitely enjoy our version a little more this year [1992]. However, the words trick or treat have new meaning!

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS



Would you like to...

**Be a docent on a history walking tour?**

**Help out at the archives under the supervision of Katheryn Carrier, special collections librarian**

· **Explore ways of getting local history into the schools?**

**Serve as all-around helper with regard to tasks that must be carried out regularly—newsletters, mailings, or maintaining the website?**

**Attend TAHS board meetings to find out more about board activities and what you might do to participate?**

**Attending TADL board meetings to let that board know we have a keen interest in maintaining the archives at the library.**

· **Or...do whatever job you think would be useful to the Society?**

**Leave an email at [traversehistory@gmail.com](mailto:traversehistory@gmail.com) if you are interested in doing any of these things. We can always use more help to preserve, protect, and present history!**

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### CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!

**TRAVERSEHISTORY.ORG | LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Traverse Area Historical Society - PO Box 7051 - Traverse City, MI 49696-7051**