

AUGUST 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.

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## INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

- **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 concluded our spring program in May with a Zoom presentation with our partners at the Traverse Area District Library on our upcoming summer tours. We highlighted our downtown tour and shared how our members and visitors to our area can take advantage both of our in-person tours and our virtual tour. Our virtual tour can be found on our website at <https://traversehistory.org/tours/>

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We also showed portions of our videos on the Oakwood Cemetery tour. This series of videos produced last December by board member Jim Warner and presented by Peg Siciliano gives a wonderful blend of on-site information and archival materials.

For those unable to attend our May program, it was recorded and can be found at the TADL website. Here is the link to the recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXM80DSZrI4>  
National History Day Award Winners: Each year the Society covers the registration fees for all of our local middle school students who participate in the local, Michigan and National History Day competition programs. We are excited to announce that pair of young historians from Traverse East Middle School advanced to the National History Day level and won the George Washington Leadership in History Prize.

Eighth Graders Elyse Heffner and Veronika Caughran received this award for their project "George Washington's Farewell Address." They completed research, prepared a presentation paper, and a presented an exhibit of their findings. They were a finalist at East Middle School and had the opportunity to compete at the State level. They were winners at the State level and competed at the National Level. At the National level, they won the Junior Division - George Washington Leadership Award. Their award included a Certificate of Achievement, medals and each of them receiving a \$500 cash scholarship to use at the college of their choice.



Continued ...

Elyse Heffner and Veronika Caughran with their Certificate of Achievements and Medals.

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**FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONTINUED**

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We have invited these national award winners to be the keynote presenters at our annual meeting in October and they have accepted our invitation. Congratulations to all the students for participating and being award winners in 2021. Much thanks their teachers as well.

Hitchcock-Goodale Site Completion: The Society completed its important preservation work this year in the establishment of the Hitchcock-Goodale Farm site at Hickory Hills. We gathered on July 11th to unveil the sign and speak on pioneering couple, Thomas Hitchcock and Helen Goodale, whose homestead we honored.

Thomas Hitchcock, who arrived in Northern Michigan in the early 1850s, worked for the Hannah and Lay Company, and before their marriage, Helen Goodale was the first school teacher in Traverse City. They settled on this farmland in 1870, purchasing it in 1874. The area was sold to Floyd Clinch, of Clinch Park fame, in 1930, and eventually came into the City's possession. The family still owns five acres of land to the north of Hickory Hills.

At the dedication ceremony, Jon Wilson, who is the great-great grandson of Thomas Hitchcock and Helen Goodale, his son Sam Wilson and his granddaughter Pricilla Racine joined Peg Siciliano, Sharon Jennings and I and discussed the importance of the couple to Traverse City.



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**FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONTINUED**

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This project started three years ago when Gary Wilson, another great-great grandson, contacted the Traverse Area Historical Society about a way to honor these very early local settlers. Board Member Matt Groleau took the lead role in the Society's activities. He worked very closely with the family, and with Derek Melville, the Superintendent of Traverse City's Parks and Recreation Department. Their joint efforts, even through COVID, led to this pleasant enclave and place of rest. Those who sit on the site's benches are encouraged to recall the hard work and sacrifices made by all of those who came before us.

Gary Wilson was unable to attend the ceremony but shared his remarks that were read by Peg at the event. His remarks included the following:

*"On behalf of the Wilson and Walker families who are the Hitchcock's descendants, I extend sincere thanks to the Traverse Area Historical Society and the Parks and Recreation Division of Traverse City for endorsing preservation of the farmstead site and collaboratively stewarding the project to fruition. I especially want to thank Matt Groleau, Peg Siciliano, and Derek Melville for the indispensable roles they have played in making this project a reality.*

*Roy and Everett Wilson, my grandfather and grand-uncle who grew up on this farm, cherished it in their hearts all of their lives. They brought their children here, and those children brought their own children, every summer. We hiked through the myrtle that grew everywhere in the woods, played in the stream, admired the fence-row of stately oak trees, and climbed about in the fieldstone cellar of the long-gone farmhouse. We heard stories about Billy, the beloved blind horse behind whom the boys plowed the rough fields that fed the family. Grandpa and Everett described their wild sled rides down Randolph Street in the winter. And they talked of the love that the family, especially devoted Aunts Top and Puss, shared with them after their mother died.*

*The beautiful plaque, benches, and landscaped site will welcome Hickory Hills visitors for many years to come. Those visitors will come away knowing something new and interesting about the history of Traverse City. For we descendants of the Hitchcocks, and especially of Roy and Everett Wilson, the peace that settles on this place marks a profound and special homecoming for those who lived here."*

Con Foster Collection Update: Another way our Society meets its mission is preserving our local history. The Society regularly inquires about the progress being made on the uses of the Con Foster Museum Collection. Traverse City Commissioner Roger Putnam has been very helpful in sharing our inquires on this issue with the City Administration.

He met with City Manager Marty Colburn and Assistant Manager Penny Hill recently and discussed the status of the collection to date. Here are several of the takeaways from that meeting:

1. The artifacts are still safely secured in the lower level of the Carnegie building.
2. It appears NAGPRA requirements have been met and the human remains (determined to be likely Native American) have been properly returned to respective Tribes for their disposition.
3. Some limited City funds have been budgeted to complete the inventory and finalize future possibilities of ensuring the collection is accurately maintained. He is seeking input from experts in the museum field for potential grant opportunities that could help in that effort.
4. The Carnegie building status is currently owned and maintained by the City of Traverse City and has the Crooked Tree Arts as its sole occupant. The income from their lease has been used, along with dedicated funds from a trust to maintain the building for its present use. That trust is nearing depletion, so future funding and operations remain uncertain.

In the meantime, he believes it is important to keep an open dialog and explore every option to provide for the safekeeping of the Con Foster materials. He will continue to provide any new developments that pertain.

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

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This summer we are able to conduct our tours in person. Our remaining tours are scheduled:

**Downtown Tours:** Meeting at the Statue of Perry Hannah on the corner of Union and 6th Street in Traverse City. Last Saturday of every month, June – September, 10 am – 11:30 am.  
August 28th and September 25th

**Oakwood Cemetery Tours:** Meeting at the entrance to the Oakwood Cemetery off of 8th Street in Traverse City. Second and fourth Sunday of every month, June – September, 4 pm – 5:30 pm.  
August 22nd; September 12th, and 26th.

Looking forward to our Fall Monthly programs, we are again able to present them in person in the McGuire Room of the Traverse Area District Library. All programs will be on Sundays at 2:00 PM.

**September 19th:** Explore the Secrets and Mysteries of Dating Historic Photos!

Join us and discover hints and strategies for dating and identifying those perplexing, unidentified photos. Past Historical Society Archivist Peg Siciliano will offer ideas using historic images of local people and locations. Siciliano has a Master's Degree in American History from the College of William and Mary with a Specialty in Archives. She is currently on the TAHS Board, is a teaching assistant at TCAPS, and writes local history articles for the Record Eagle.

**October 17th:** Society Annual Meeting. We will present the state of the Society and hold Board elections. Our keynote speakers will be National History Day Award Winners Elyse Heffner and Veronika Caughran presenting their project on George Washington's Farewell Address.

**November 21st:** The program information will be shared in the near future.

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## FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

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As of August 1, 2021, we have 151 members. We are happy to welcome Emily Modrall as our newest member but sad to report the death of Life Member, Ken Wyckoff. Ken was always in support of preserving our local history and he will be missed. We are also announcing a change to our membership categories and membership form that will officially take place September 1, 2021. To simplify things, we will have just two member categories which will be Student for \$10 and Individual for \$25. In addition, there will be places you can sign up to make an additional donation. TAHS is a non-profit organization, and we use our member dues and additional donations to carry out our goal to preserve, protect and present our local history. This includes giving financial help to TADL to care for the collection, putting on programs and tours, and various other projects for which we lend our support. A big **THANK YOU** to all our members for supporting us and we will look forward to your continued help in the future!

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**FROM TREASURER GROLEAU'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. In addition, since the last newsletter, the Board has approved a motion for us to be a fiduciary partner with a project being headed by Emily Modrall. We have received \$10,000 in grant funds into our accounts for her project and those are currently in our bank account to support her project. Finally, the Board approved \$10,000 in funding to expand the Archives at the Traverse Area District Library. We intend to provide those funds to the library in October.

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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 Native history is taking shape. With generous support from a Rotary Charities Seed Grant, consultants and contributors have been engaged, and efforts are under way to identify the historically and culturally significant locations where new signage will be installed.

This project is also expanding to the north. In partnership with the Northport Public Schools, a grant from the Native American Heritage Fund was secured in June to integrate aspects of this signage project into classrooms in three Leelanau County schools. The same Native consultants working on the signs themselves will work directly in classrooms with students and teachers on various aspects of local Native history, and, like the Traverse City-based project, public signs will be developed for sites in Leelanau County.

Please get in touch with Emily Modrall with any questions or comments about the Native history signage 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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The Library Board has approved the spending and we have ordered the new shelving for the Local History Collection. While this is very exciting, we are looking at 8-12 weeks for delivery but are going to be using that time to continue collection maintenance. We received a very generous private donation of \$5,000 which is helping fund a portion of the shelving and new boxes for some of the materials.

We had a wonderful crew of 4 Petertyl Interns this year. They learn about local history, preservation, went on field trips, and helped on some long-standing projects. The interns were supervised by Amy Barritt and Robin Stanley, who will report more at a later date. Thank you to TAHS for providing the students with a wonderful experience and helping TADL Local History Collection too!

Finally, we finally received the digitized records from the microfilm of the Immaculate Conception Church, Peshawbetown – Birth, Marriage, and Death Records from 1850-1948. This microfilm was acquired from the NMC library. Adult Services Coordinator, Melissa McKenna thought of this idea and followed it to fruition. We are thrilled at the windows to the past that these records might open.

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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 the summer days were punctuated with the calls of peddlers and fix-it men. The scissors grinder man not only sharpened scissors and knives but also repaired umbrellas. He carried his stand on his back and would set it up in the yard to peddle the grinder wheel and sharpen knives and scissors. A pot mender also came by to repair porcelain pots and pans with 'fix-its' a washer and bolt to cover the holes.

Men collected scrap iron, copper, brass and rags. Nothing was thrown out. Wood ashes were collected for the making of soap. The pickup man gave you a free bar of soap. The soap factory was over by Kroger's. The ice man brought 14 to 16 inch thick ice that had been cut on Boardman Lake or the Bay during the winter. It was cut by hand and hauled out by horses who sometimes drowned. It was stored, surrounded by sawdust, in commercial ice houses to keep it from melting.

If you wanted ice, you would put a card in the window showing how many pounds you needed. Then the ice was cut and brought into the house. The ice man always left a puddle on the kitchen floor due to the setting of the ice down to be chipped away to fit the ice box. The kids loved to follow the iceman to eat the chips that fell from the big blocks when cut.

The milkman brought his product in large cans on a pushcart. He ladled out the milk into your container. Our long ago neighbors sound like the original ecologists no gasoline no waste and recycle everything.



## 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**