

AUGUST 2023

PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND PRESENT



TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**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**
 - *Recent Programs & the Society's Annual Meeting*
- **From the Desks' of Our Board Members & Much More!**

FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK

Since our May newsletter, our tour season is in full swing. Our tour season began again in June with an exciting new tour: Perry Hannah & His Neighbors, A Walking Tour of Sixth Street and Environs. This two-hour, mile-long “show & tell” encompasses twelve blocks of splendid turn-of-the-century homes, with a short detour to Central School. With hundreds of historical photos, we cover a bit of architecture, a bunch of local events, and a whole lot of interesting folks (with just a whisper of gossip). Join us for a whole new perspective into the lives and times of Perry Hannah and his neighbors along this stately brick street – we promise you’ll never look at it the same way again.

Details the time and dates of this tour as well as our Oakwood Cemetery Tours can be found at our website at <https://www.traversehistory.org/tours>

We have also established our fall program schedule. All our society’s 2023-24 programs will be held on the third Sunday of the month in the McGuire room, starting at 2:00 PM. The usual length of our programs is one hour.

September 17- Educator Karen Reiser will present on the history of education on the Old Mission Peninsula. In her presentation, she will follow the path of educational presentation from the Anishinabek to the present-day European style of education. The location of her research and writing was the Old Mission Peninsula. However, this history can be applied to the development of non-Native American education in the Midwest, prior to and during the era of western expansion and beyond. Come learn about a school on a schooner, in the bachelor quarters of a bull, and more. As a lifelong educator, Karen was motivated to write on this subject as she has watched education evolve during her tenure.

October 15- TAHS Annual Meeting. Four national and state Michigan History Day students have been invited to share their research and projects. These will include Junior Division First Place National Finalist Oliva Reding who will share her project on Socrates: An Examined Life. This meeting will also include our annual meeting with board elections and a small proposal to amend our bylaws to clarify our ability to award student grants.

November 19- Local vintage-wear aficionado, Nancy Bordine, will be sharing her passion for fashion in an engaging timeline of ‘the way they wore’. Nancy is known for her NMC Lifelong Learning series “Women’s Role in American Society as Revealed in Fashion”, and her annual Heritage Center vintage fashion shows “The Way We Wore”. Attendees to Nancy’s programs have enjoyed opening ‘surprise hat boxes’ to ‘model’ the next interactive fashion piece with the audience. Learning history has never been so much fun!

We hope you will join us on one of tours and attend some of our fall programs.

CONTINUED

FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

Dear Members,

Our current number of members is 141 and we would like to see that number grow. Our Board members will each be reaching out to three people who are interested in history, and awarding them a gift membership in hopes they will continue to support TAHS. Please consider giving your friends and family, who enjoy history, a gift membership for their birthday or Christmas. This is a great way to spread our mission and grow our numbers.

This membership is a very special gift, because it is allowing the Historical Society to keep the history of this amazing area alive. Without your support our history would fade away only to be found in the TADL files! We'd like to welcome new member VICKY GREIG from Berkley, MI. and send our condolences to the family of BETH ALPERS. Beth is the daughter of Ralph and Mary Lautner, who were very loyal and supportive members from our early days. Rest in peace Beth.

FROM TREASURER OFFENHAUSER'S DESK

The Society's cautious approach to our finances since exiting covid has yielded positive results. We are presently concluding a budget review and the numbers show a significant positive result, both in expenses (lower) and income (higher). The biggest factor was the contribution from the popular WTCM podcast Traverse City Look Back; created and hosted by fellow member Jordan Anderson. As part of this project, we also received funding through Bill Marsh Auto Group.

Our member's generosity helped fund the restoration of a Civil War veteran's headstone in partnership with the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, increased support of TADL's storage, cataloging, and the Julius Petertyl Intern Program of our vast local historical archives. We also supported the work of Scott Schwander in his work to refurbish the headstones of Civil War veterans in the Oakwood Cemetery. An example of his work is shown in the following before and after pictures of the headstone of Benjamin Adsit (1823-1897), a Union Army veteran who served in the 91st New York Infantry.



These are some of the ways that your support makes it possible to fulfill our mission. Thank you!

NEWS ON THE KCHI WIIKWEDONG ANISHINAABE HISTORY PROJECT

By Emily Modrall

The Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project is grateful for recent grants from Kettering Family Philanthropies and the Santa Fe Natural Tobacco Company Foundation in support of the final phase of the project. Four signs are nearly ready for installation in Traverse City this autumn, with five more set to be installed in Leelanau County in autumn 2023 or spring 2024.

NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

By Melissa A. McKenna, Department Head, Adult Services Supervisor, Local History Collection

Thanks once again to the generous support of the Traverse Area Historical Society, the Traverse Area District Library welcomed two Petertyl Interns for 8 days during July and August 2023. The applicant pool was impressive this year. So much so that both of the selected interns are completing masters programs and had already worked in archives. This vast amount of knowledge and experience allowed them to hit the ground running.

Our two interns for this summer are Zoe Schwartz and Arleta Robinson. Zoe has completed her courses for her Master of Arts in Comparative History from Central European University and is working on her thesis. Arleta is finishing her final semesters in the Masters of Library and Information Science program at St. John's University.

The internship provided an opportunity for Zoe and Arleta to work hands-on with a portion of the LHC, as well as educational sessions with a person in the archival field. TADL approached Terry Beamsley, a consultant and museum professional with experience working for The Henry Ford and Toledo Museum of Art, who generously agreed to work with the interns and provide their instructional piece. Because of the archival experience the interns already possessed, these sessions were able to dig deeper into questions of ethics and policy, as opposed to the more basic best practices for handling materials.

For their hands-on work, the interns helped to organize and create a finding aid for three boxes of historical items related to TADL's history. The Woodmere Library location is celebrating its 25th anniversary next year and it will also be the 165th anniversary of libraries in Traverse City. We want to be able to share the wonderful story of libraries in the Traverse City area throughout 2024, and the organization and accessibility of our own history is a key piece of this.

Our interns finished their last day with a presentation to TADL staff and the board members of both TADL and TAHS were invited to attend. They delivered an informative and entertaining talk on their intern experience and what they were able to accomplish with their project. It was another successful year for all people and organizations

THE TADL LOCAL HISTORY COLLECTION: A BRIGHT STEP INTO THE FUTURE

By Peg Siciliano, Retired TAHS Archivist

Last month I was thrilled by what I saw when I was given my first tour of the Traverse Area District Library's "newly" reorganized Local History Collection. I use quotes around "newly," as the reorganization started several years ago. However, due to the pandemic and other demands on my time, I had not seen the redesigned area until that visit.

What I saw was a room sporting movable, state-of-the-art, archival shelving units; shelves lined with collections stored in archival quality boxes; and a labeling system allowing library staff to find answers to researchers' questions.

I also learned of a well-crafted system for handling research inquiries. As part of the library system, inquiries are first handled by TADL's regular reference librarians. The librarians determine if items from the Local History Collection are actually needed. They then pass LHC specific inquiries on to Melissa McKenna, department head of Adult Services and Supervisor of the LHC. Melissa will reach out to the patron if more information or the filling out of a research request form is necessary. She then forwards the request along to Robin Stanley, LHC Library Assistant. Robin then locates the materials requested and gives them to Melissa to make the arrangements for the patron to come in to view them in the Adult Services Department on the library's second floor. This system is in place to protect the collection and make sure the resources will be usable and available for many years to come.

In addition to handling research questions, Melissa, with Robin's assistance, also manages the intake of items into the collection and TADL's growing Local History Collection volunteer group - the Citizen Historians. Robin's main tasks are the preservation, arrangement and indexing of the collection, The Traverse Area Historical Society, which managed this rich collection of photographs and documents up until 2014, is so appreciative of the excellent work that is being done at TADL. In 2014, due financial exigencies, the TAHS was no longer able to manage this valuable collection of thousands of important historical items. TADL, just like many libraries across the nation, already had its own local history collection. But when the Library Board and Staff chose to take in the TAHS archives, the TADL collection grew significantly. The process of integrating the collections and arranging storage and staff (interrupted by the 2+ years of COVID) took time.

While improvements will continue, the system now serving this area's local history research needs truly is something about which Traverse City can be proud.

Thank You's

While TADL staff manages the Local History Collection, many of the improvements mentioned above are thanks to outside grants and ongoing financial support. Major financial support comes from the TAHS and thanks for past grant support goes to the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians and a generous donation from Dr. William Howard, who was Julius Petertyl's physician and friend.

FAMILY HISTORY OF OTTO KROPP

By Joan Maule

I lived much of my life in Traverse City. I was born on Cass Street at a time when it was a road with sidewalks but no curbs and gutters. The curbs and gutters went in when FDR instituted the WPA. I went to Union Street School and Traverse City High School. I married my high school sweetheart and raised our six children in Traverse City. In 2000, we bought a condo in Elmbrook Township in Leelanau County.



Both of my parents were from Leelanau County. My father, Otto Kropp. He was born in Good Harbor, where the German Lutheran Church was located on land donated by my great grandfather Charles Kropp. My grandfather Charlie Kropp married Amelia Litzau, who died quite early from pernicious anemia. The group farm had a large barn where they had a blacksmith shop. Grandpa also did a lot of well drilling. My mother was Florence Atkinson from the Atkinson resort on Little Traverse Lake. The resort hosted families, mostly from Chicago during the summers. Mother was the youngest of nine children, including eight boys, and the kids would sleep in the barns in the summers when the resorters came.

After my grandparents passed away, the resort became the Leelanau Country Inn.



Leelanau Country Inn in 1877

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERS



Would you like to...

- Be a docent on a history walking tour?
- 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 if you are interested in doing any of these things. We can always use more help to preserve, protect, and present history!

CONNECT WITH US ONLINE!

[TRAVERSEHISTORY.ORG](http://traversehistory.org) | LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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