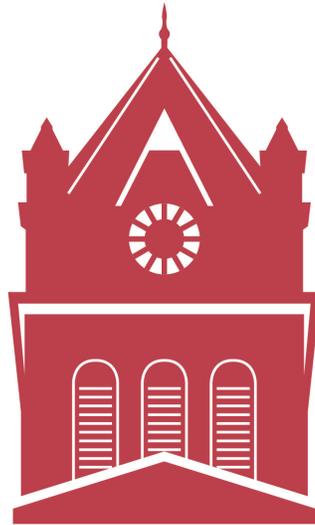


**November 28, 2018**



## TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Board Members:

Stephen Siciliano,  
president  
Fred Anderson, vice  
president  
Peg Siciliano, secretary  
Larry Hains, treasurer  
Matt Groleau  
Sharon Jennings  
Jenny Loup  
Jim Warner

Newsletter Editor

Bill Ruesink

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

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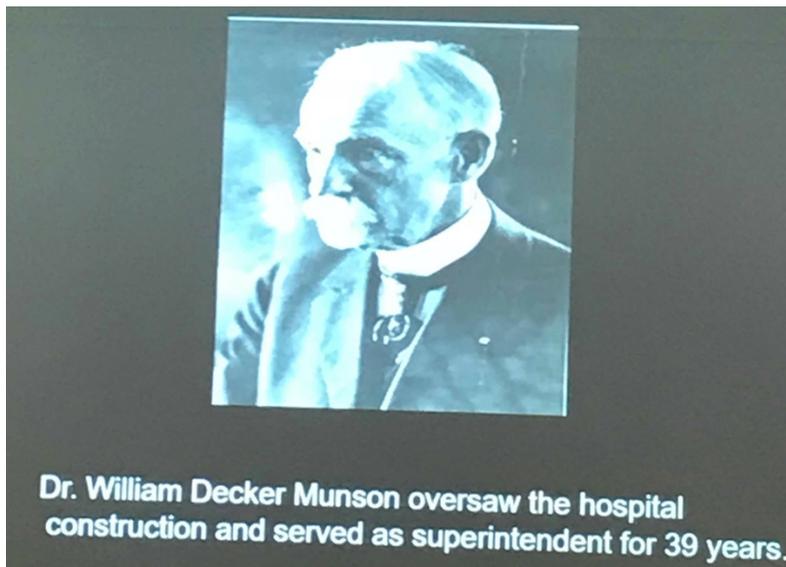
## From President Siciliano's Desk

Greetings and Happy Autumn to our members. This issue of the Newsletter will provide a recap of our autumn program activities as well as our future plans for the winter of 2019.

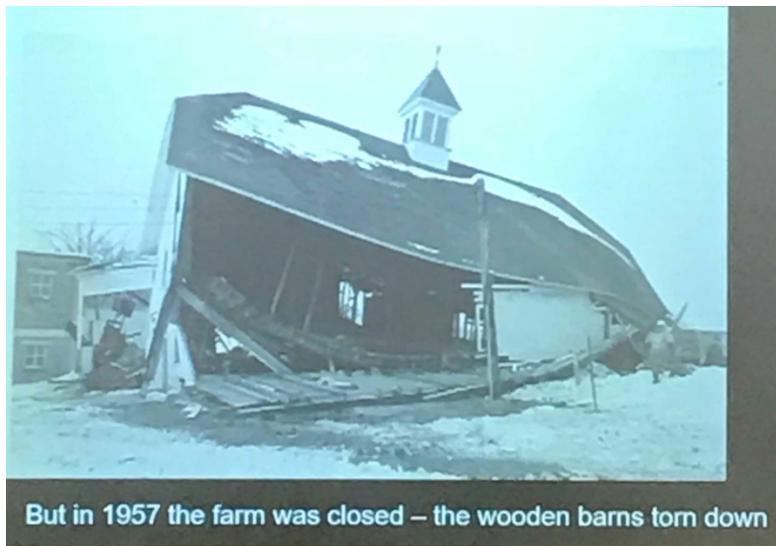
### Continuing Successful Programming

Our first program for the 2018-2019 Monthly History Program Series on September 16 was a new approach for the society. Karen Schmidt presented on the history of the hospital, farm, historic barns park and gardens at the former Traverse City State Hospital. She joined the Botanic Garden board in 2001 and is presently board chair and acting executive director.

She discussed how Dr. William Munson's vision of creating the beauty of surroundings at the state hospital would have a positive impact on the patients. As superintendent for 39 years, Munson was responsible for building gardens and parklands and chose the Kirkbride architecture.



Munson was also responsible for providing agricultural work for patients so they had meaningful work and the hospital had fresh food, but the farm was closed in 1957.



Ms. Schmidt then discussed the rebirth of the Botanic Gardens starting in 2004. She showed the remarkable transformation of the gardens and facilities through the work of the Botanic Gardens and multiple capital campaigns.



Twenty-six members and community visitors attended the presentation.



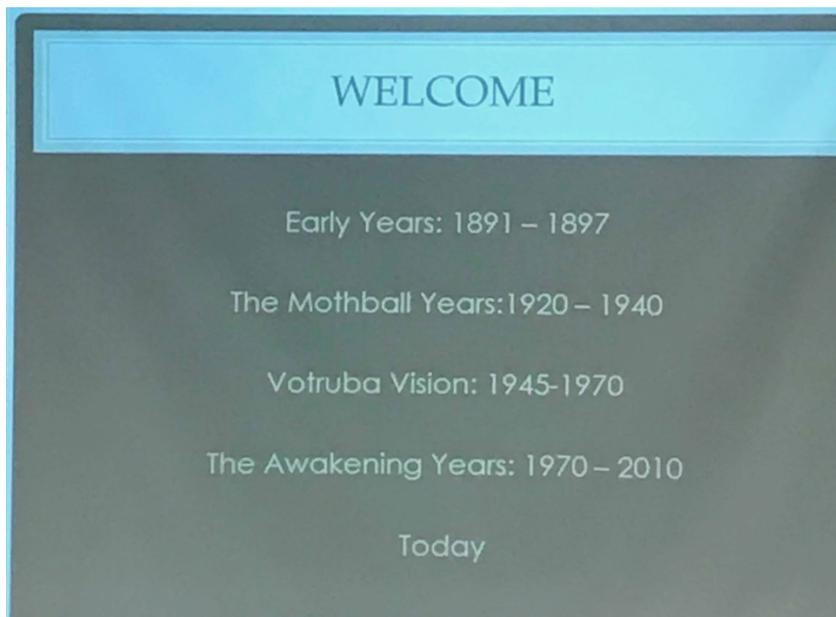
At our second program, on October 21st, Peg Siciliano provided a short presentation on the history of the Traverse Area Historical Society to give both members and prospective members background on the origins of our society. The annual meeting was then held that included a report on the state of the society, presentation of a proposed 2019 annual budget, and the re-election of board member Larry Hains and Stephen Siciliano. About two dozen members attended the program and meeting.

Our third and final program of 2018 was held on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Our society joined with the NMC's Dennis Museum Center to offer its program in conjunction with Visions of American Life: Paintings from the Manoogian Collection, 1850-1950, organized and toured by the Detroit Institute of Arts.

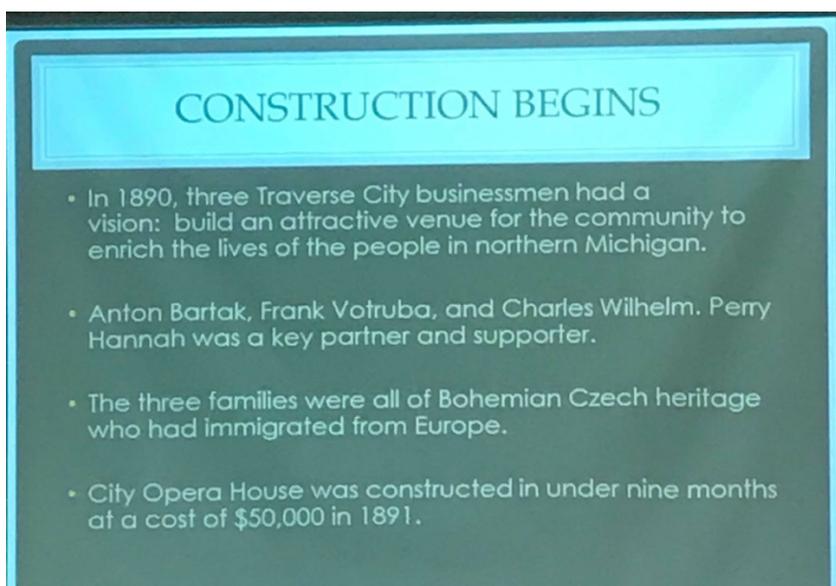
Board Vice President Fred Anderson presented a program about the history of the City Opera House in downtown Traverse City.



Fred talked about the different stages of the history of the Opera House.



He then discussed how the City Opera House came to be including the families that were the driving forces behind the creation and construction of the facility.



Fred closed with the dramatic changes to the interior of the City Opera House, even including the seating.



BUILDING CITY OPERA HOUSE, 1891

Here is picture of the original seating and the new seating:



Thirty-seven members and community visitors enjoyed the presentation.

Our tours in September and October were equally successful. We had several downtown and cemetery tours. The two Halloween cemetery tours resulted in 150 attendees. All have been well attended and the public feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This photo from one of the cemetery tours was taken by Jane Boursaw of the Old Mission Gazette.



See Program Coordinator and Board member Jen Loop's column on page 8 for the upcoming program events.

### Strategic Planning Effort

The Board engaged in strategic planning exercises since June to build our society. We conducted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis and then prioritized key efforts for our year's work. We determined that building our membership needs to be the primary focus. We identified several initiatives in particular:

- Develop ways to publicize our activities starting with a Record Eagle forum.
- Survey members on what TAHS does
- Develop online membership registration
- Reach out to former members

We did publish a forum article in the Record Eagle on October 16<sup>th</sup> that was well received by respondents. We are working on surveying our members through our Facebook page. We have authorized the funding of online membership registration through our website which should be operational within a month. We have also reached out to former members and encouraged them to resume their membership. The activities described in the following pages have helped to show that the society is active and engaged in the community.

It also helps when our partners share the news of our activities such as this Dennon sign:



We ask that our members spread the word.

## From Vice President Anderson's Desk

We are working with downtown businesses and local arts organizations to support a TAHS-generated effort to place 10 historic plaques in downtown Traverse City. We hope to have this joint venture completed no later than next Spring.

## From Board Treasurer Hains' Desk

We continue to work successfully to meet our financial obligations and build a positive fund balance in 2018. In addition, we have begun to restore the Julius Petertyl fund for historical education and have a current balance of over \$7,000 in that fund. We have significantly reduced past expenses and through our membership dues, tours, publications, and generous donations we are in a stronger position than in several years. As a result the fund balance for our general operations, including the Mary Lautner fund, is now over \$18,000. In order to receive more interest on our funds, we have invested \$10,000 in a 13-month certificate of deposit.

We have also committed to monthly payments of \$100 to the Traverse Area District Library to support the care of the historical archives which are located there. Our 2019 Annual Budget was presented to the membership at the annual meeting in October and approved at our November board meeting. It is available on our website.

## From Membership Committee Chair Jennings' Desk

Currently our membership stands at 158 members. We'd like to welcome our new members: Gary and Janet Baillod, Mary Dame, Soren Teichman, and Gary Wilson. Thank you to all our loyal members who make it possible to carry out our mission to "preserve, protect, and present" our wonderful history! And since our #1 goal is to increase our numbers please spread the word of our important work!

## From Program and Events Committee Chair Loup's Desk

We are excited about our upcoming season of monthly history programs held in the Janis Room at the Dennon Museum Center or the McGuire room at the Traverse Area District Library.

Sunday, January 20, 2019 – 1pm Janis Room at the Dennon Museum Center

### **Transformation of the West Bay Water Front**

Join TAHS for this monthly meeting held in conjunction with Visions of American Life: Paintings from the Manoogian Collection, 1850-1950, organized and toured by the Detroit Institute of Arts. Local historian and Traverse Area Historical Society board member Peg Siciliano will present a program about the transformation of West Bay and Boardman Lake from industrial to recreation and of Traverse City from lumbering and industrial hub to an outdoor mecca and tourist/retirement hub. Free of charge thanks to a grant from Art Bridges.

The schedule for our subsequent monthly programs will be announced in our next newsletter and on our website.

We welcome your input and would love to hear from you if you have topic suggestions or ideas regarding presenters. Feel free to send along suggestions to Jen at [loup.jen@gmail.com](mailto:loup.jen@gmail.com).

## The Preservation Corner by Peg Siciliano

**Preservation Opportunity for the foundations of the Hitchcock/Goodale farmhouse:** Discussions continue concerning the preservation and presentation of the Hitchcock/Goodale farmhouse foundations located in Hickory Hills. Hitchcock/Goodale descendant Gary Wilson, TAHS Board members Matt Groleau and Peg Siciliano, and Traverse City Parks and Recreation Superintendent Derek Melville, have examined the site several times. Melville indicated that the City likely would be open to supporting preservation moves that could include clearing and laying chips around the area, installing benches, and creating historic signage. He asked that preliminary plans be drawn up, which will then be presented to the Traverse City Parks and Recreation Committee for comment. The hope is that work on this area can begin in spring 2019.

**Carnegie Building and Museum Collection:** At an October 8<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting of the Traverse City Commissioners, TAHS Board Member Peg Siciliano offered the advice and/or assistance of the TAHS in matters concerning the Con Foster Museum artifact collection.

Subsequently TAHS Board Members Matt Groleau and Jenny Loup spoke to Assistant City Manager Penny Hill, and City Commissioner Amy Shamroe, respectively, about the collection. Both Hill and Shamroe indicated that the City has formed an ad hoc committee specifically to review the City's museum collections policy. Because of this, which could take months, it is unlikely anyone will gain access to the collection until policy has been established. They also indicated that movement on this will be slow because the City continues to focus on the repatriation of Native American items.

While the TAHS Board commends a review of the collection's policy, there is some confusion as to why such a review precludes a supervised viewing of the collection. TAHS Board representatives will continue to look into this issue.

**Central Elementary School:** TCAPS appears to have decided that major decisions regarding Central Grade will not be made for at least five years. Currently TCAPS' near-term intentions include spending a portion of \$165,000 set aside for district-wide security and safety reconfigurations on Central.

Nevertheless, those interested in Central's future will want to follow decisions concerning a rebuild of Montessori/Glen Loomis, which is TCAPS' current major facilities' focus. Public sessions on Montessori's future will be held in December. TCAPS administrators are looking for a January School Board decision on whether to adopt a 2021 or 2022 opening for a rebuilt Montessori. Possible locations for a new Montessori include its current location on Oak Street; south of Thirlby Field along 14<sup>th</sup> Street; and off Silver Lake Road, between West Middle School and Franke Road.

Before the August, 2018 school bond vote, and more recently at a November 7<sup>th</sup> TCAPS Board Finance/Operations Committee Meeting, School Board members have wondered whether the futures of the two schools (which are located approximately ½ of a mile from each other) should be addressed at the same time.

TCAPS Administrators Superintendent Paul Soma, and Associate Superintendent of Finance and Operations Christine Thomas Hill, have both indicated that the future of Montessori and Central Grade should be treated as two separate issues. They also indicated that tying discussion of Central's future to that of Montessori's could slow down much needed improvements to the Montessori facilities.

Separating these two issues may be shortsighted. There are a couple of reasons why considering their futures at the same time could be a wise move. First, a Montessori move to near WMS could leave TCAPS land open for a move of Central Grade school functions to new facility either on Oak or 14<sup>th</sup> Streets. Second, if a new Montessori was built with "extra" classroom space, that space, plus possible "extra" space at the new Eastern, could conceivably house students moved out of a closing Central Grade school.

This piece is not about whether the current Central Grade School building should continue as a school, be torn down, or perhaps sold and repurposed. It is, however, posing the following relevant question: *Could current TCAPS decisions on when and how to rebuild the Montessori/Glen Loomis building on Oak Street have an impact on future decisions regarding Central Grade School?*

If readers have other preservation concerns they would like to see addressed, please e-mail your ideas to [contact@traversehistory.org](mailto:contact@traversehistory.org).

## **Feature Article: JULIUS PETERTYL LIVED T.C. HISTORY!** **by Bob Wilhelm** (Reprinted from a previous TAHS Newsletter)

For more than a century Julius Petertyl played a major role in the development and history of the Grand Traverse area.

The Petertyl Family originated in the Netherlands and migrated to Bohemia (Czech Republic.) European upheaval in the mid 1850's led to a mass migration to the United States and many Bohemians settled in the Grand Traverse region.

As a boy Julius delivered newspapers in the Central Neighborhood. He became acquainted with many of the neighborhood's prominent citizens: Parm Gilbert (City and Circuit Court judge), Dr. E. L. Thirlby and his wife Elsie, and Charlie Rennie who opened the first local gas station.

In 1999 Julius was presented a bricklayers award by the International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Crafts Workers in recognition of 75 years of outstanding service and dedication.

Julius' skills contributed to a variety of projects scattered throughout the community including the Park Place Hotel, churches, two additions to Munson Hospital and several structures at the State Hospital including the magnificent cathedral barn.

Julius also played a major part in the documentation of 460 houses and buildings, which led to having the Central Neighborhood District included in the National Register of Historic Places.

Julius wrote articles on a wide variety of history-related subjects, some quite humorous. "Outhouses were not only 'one holers' but some were especially sized seats for various members of the family. Seats were sometimes carpeted for softness."

The TAHS thanks our former Historian of the Year for his generous gift to the Society that enabled the Society to fulfill several special projects and expand local history for the future.

Thank you Julius, from a fellow Bohemian,

Bob Wilhelm

## **TAHS Petertyl Fund is Positively Impacting Local History**

The TAHS is utilizing the Petertyl Fund to nurture a love of history in our area youth.

Continued Michigan History Day Support: In 2018 the TAHS Petertyl Fund covered the fees of eight TCAPS students who went to the State Finals. In spring 2019 the Petertyl Fund will be used to support local students who choose to participate in the Historical Society of Michigan's History Day program. Middle School students who choose to work with their school's History Day mentor will have their \$25.00 registration fee for state competition (should they advance to it) paid for by the Petertyl Fund. Any Traverse Area students who advance to nationals also will have those \$150 registration fees covered. .

TADL Intern Program: The TAHS is happy to announce yet another local history educational effort supported by the Petertyl Fund. In the summer of 2019 the TAHS' Petertyl Archival Internship Program will be reactivated. Based on a program from our time in the Carnegie History Center, this paid internship will

give one or two northern Michigan students a chance both to learn about archives, and to perform needed work in the historical archives at the Traverse Area District Library.

Past TAHS Archivist Peg Siciliano will provide volunteer supervision of the intern(s), under the watch of TADL Librarian Amy Barritt. Both Siciliano and the intern(s) will be TADL volunteers, although the intern will receive a stipend from the Petertyl Fund. Siciliano will craft and supervise the internship, with approval from Barritt.

The Society is currently involved in a two-year campaign to revitalize the Petertyl Fund in order to fund additional projects for the benefit of the community. As part of this work, the last two months of this year are marking the end of the \$100 Siciliano matching grant. Please take advantage of this opportunity to direct any year-end charitable contributions to the Petertyl Fund so your generosity is matched before December 31<sup>st</sup>.

To make a donation to the Petertyl Fund between now and the end of December, simply make your check out to the TAHS with "Petertyl Fund" in the memo line. Donations can be sent to: TAHS, P.O. Box 7051, Traverse City, MI, 49686-7051

## Opportunities for Volunteers

Would you like to...

- Help out at the archives under the supervision of Amy Barritt, special collections librarian (see her report in this issue for possibilities)?
- Be an assistant for TAHS downtown or cemetery tours?
- Write an article about history or nature for the Grand Traverse Journal?
- Explore ways of getting local history into the schools?
- Serve on a board committee to work on such projects as newsletters, mailings, programming or maintaining the website?
- Attend TAHS board meetings to find out more about board activities and what you might do to participate?
- Consider being a program presenter at an upcoming monthly program at TADL?
- Or...do whatever job you think would be useful to the Society?

Leave an email at [contact@traversehistory.org](mailto:contact@traversehistory.org) if you are interested in doing any of these things.

## Link to TAHS Website

To connect to the Traverse Area Historical Society website, click on <http://traversehistory.org>.