

September 15, 2017



TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Board Members:

Stephen Siciliano,
president
Fred Anderson, vice
president
Gini LeClaire, secretary
Larry Hains, treasurer
Sharon Jennings
Julie Schopieray
Peg Siciliano
Jim Warner

Newsletter Editor
Bill Ruesink

Contents

- From President Siciliano's Desk
- News from the Archives
- Summer and Fall Tours, 2017
- TAHS 2017 - 2018 Programs
- Opportunities for Volunteers
- Link to TAHS website

From President Siciliano's Desk

Greetings to our members:

Your board in the last four months has continued to work on advancing our organization's mission. We continue to work successfully to meet our financial obligations. We are working within our approved 2017 budget through the success of our tours, membership dues, publication revenues and particularly the generosity of our members and public. We have slowly begun to restore our Petertyl Account for historical education, and 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. Board member Peg

Siciliano and I have also established a matching grant for our members where we will match contributions to the Petertyl Fund up to \$100 per month for this calendar year. Thus far generous donors have fully matched our donation for the first seven months. I want to thank these donors for their generosity.

We continue to have our principal office at 627 Eastwood Avenue, in Traverse City. Our board meetings are being held there and we are glad that members are attending our meetings at this new location. All members are welcome to attend. Our next board meeting will be Tuesday, October 3, 2017, at 6:00 pm.

Our expanded use of email blasts has worked well to share the programming announcements of ours and other historical organizations. Most TAHS members have elected to receive this enhanced information. We hope with this enhanced system, we can assist fellow historical societies in promoting historical programming within our region.

On May 21st we completed our spring monthly programs with former History Center Director Maddie Lundy's presentation of "Les Biederman and the History of Radio in Traverse City". Maddie shared Les Biederman's role in the development of radio service in Traverse City and his several other important contributions to the community. She highlighted Les' 1984 television interview that provides wonderful stories about his significant roles in the community. It can be viewed at <https://www.c-span.org/video/?124740-1/midwestern-broadcasting>.



Maddie at lectern



Les Biederman

Maddie also discussed other important radio personalities including Merlin Dumbrille and the history of the location of WTCM in the city.



Merlin Dumbrille



Maddie pointing at Traverse City aerial photo

In June, the Society resumed our two sets of tours of downtown Traverse City on Saturday mornings and of Oakwood Cemetery on Sunday evenings. We have had steady attendance but not as large as last year. Please share the word about the remaining tours. For more details, see the tour schedule below.

Looking ahead to this coming year, the board approved a great lineup of monthly programming for 2017-18 at our August board meeting. See below for the details. In particular, the Board is preparing for our society's annual meeting on October 15, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in the McGuire Room of the Traverse Area District Library. All members are encouraged to attend.

At the Annual Meeting, we will provide a brief review of society activities over the past year, share the proposed 2018 Society Budget, and have members vote on small changes to our society board bylaws. We will also vote on the re-election of some of our current board members and the election of new board members.

If any member is interested in serving on our board, please contact me at snsiciliano@gmail.com with a letter of interest in serving by our next board meeting on October 3rd.

Notification of the meeting with the proposed revised bylaws and ballots will be sent to our members' email boxes or through U.S. mail to those members without email. Looking forward to seeing you at our annual meeting.

Thank you,

Stephen Siciliano

News from the Archives

We continue to move forward on processing and describing the collections found in the archives, making them better preserved and more accessible for our researchers. Thanks to a significant donation made by the Traverse Area Historical Society during the June Traverse Area District Library board meeting, library staff were able to purchase 36 new boxes of various sizes for print and photograph materials, special enclosures and boxes for our glass plate negative collection, and oversized folders for large-scale maps and drawings. We anticipate about 15 collections will be better preserved from this donation. TAHS has been a huge support for the archives, through your time, talents, and treasures, and I cannot thank you all enough!

Currently, our team of 9 volunteers are hard at work on the most heavily-used collections in the archives. Peg Siciliano has completed processing on the Sporre-Love Collection, which documents two family lines of significance to this area, especially the Loves, who have been in the region since the 1850s. Thanks to her efforts, that collection is now open to the public and in beautiful shape. Fred Anderson has continued with the inventory of the photograph collection (and we could always use another volunteer for that!), as well as taking on a new role as being the TAHS liaison at the TADL board meetings. Thank you for keeping local history on all our minds, Fred!

Judy Kalter and Helen Altman have tag-teamed the glass plate negative collection, which is completely rehoused and almost completely described. Many of these images were previously scanned by Dave Pennington, and are available online in our digital archive. I have been hard at work on The Friendly Garden Club of Traverse City collection, which is completely rehoused and nearly 100% described. The glass plate and Friendly Garden collections are some of the largest in our holdings. Joe and Janet Novak continue to be our “clean-up crew,” taking care of small details and underappreciated collections that just need a little TLC to make them accessible to the public. Recently, they put their gloved hands to a collection of negatives of a lumber camp operated by Antrim Iron Company, which are now better housed and described more thoroughly online (example photo on next page).

TADL is gearing up for major changes in our digital archives for local history. In response to patron demand for digital duplications of large-scale negatives, maps, and blueprints, TADL assistant director for technology, Scott Morey, has approved the purchase of a full-frame DSLR camera for local history projects. I anticipate needing some (more) hardworking volunteers! Scott and his team are also working with myself to develop our new platform for viewing our digital collections. We currently run two legacy collections (<http://grandtraverse.pastperfectonline.com/> and <http://localhistory.tadl.org/>), neither of which are good fits for managing both our physical archives and our digitized and born-digital archives. We will be testing some new applications in October 2017, so expect an update in the next newsletter!

Researcher requests arrived at a steady rate through the summer, averaging about five a week. Some of the more significant uses of the archives included:

- Grace Episcopal Church celebrating their 150th Anniversary this year! Some of their parishioners came in to use our collections to research their history, which will be published in the Church's newsletter.
- A genealogist visited from North Carolina to do some intensive research on the Sleder family. She performed much of the research herself using the collections, but after she left, I performed about 5 hours of additional research, following up on various queries she had. Collections used include the Traverse City Police Records (1911-1937), the Petertyl Wagon Works Records (1881-1884), and the *Traverse City Record-Eagle* on microfilm.
- A photograph of a staged scene concerning the Julia Curtis murder on Old Mission from our photograph collection was published in the *Old Mission Gazette*.
- Long Lake is also celebrating its 150th Anniversary, and we assisted volunteers of the Township offices with gathering information and photographs (example photo on next page).

With gratitude,

Amy Barritt, MSI, CA
 Special Collections Librarian
 Traverse Area District Library
abarritt@tadl.org
 231-932-8502



2017.23: Antrim Iron Company Lumber Camp #2, men unloading logs from wagons pulled by a Holt continuous-track tractor and loading them on to flatbed train cars, 1 March 1924. From the Allen Photograph Collection, donated by Dave Barron, Image #2017.23.



1777-2: Hannah & Lay Saw Mill on Long Lake, undated. Image used in a history display at the Long Lake Township 150th Anniversary in August 2017. From the Traverse Area District Library Photograph Collection, Image #1777-2.

Summer and Fall Tours, 2017

Downtown Walking Tours starting at 10:30 AM Saturdays. This event runs each Saturday through October 14th. Participants should meet outside Horizon Books 15 minutes before the start time. Tours last approximately 1½ hours. For additional information, call [\(231\) 995-0313](tel:2319950313).

Walking tours of Oakwood Cemetery, on Sundays. Cemetery tours are available at 6:00 PM every Sunday thru October 15. These tours focus on the unique history of the area and the early pioneers who founded the community we know today. Geared towards an adult audience, the tours will last about 1½ hours. Participants are encouraged to wear shoes suitable for hiking over uneven terrain. They should meet on the sidewalk outside the cemetery near the Eighth Street entrance, approximately 15 minutes prior to start time. For additional information, call [\(231\) 941-8440](tel:2319418440).

Cemetery Tours with a Halloween Twist. We will again offer two evening tours of the Oakwood Cemetery with special stories for the season on Thursday, October 26th and Monday, October 30th. For additional information, call [\(231\) 883-2238](tel:2318832238).

TAHS 2017 - 2018 Programs

All held on Sundays at the Traverse Area District Library, McGuire Room, starting at 1:00 PM.

September 17th: "Abraham Lincoln's Presidency Through the Eyes of the Political Cartoonists of His Day." Speaker: Stephen Siciliano, TAHS Board President, Vice President for Educational Services, Northwestern Michigan College.

October 15th: Annual Meeting

November 19th: Twentieth/Twentieth-First Century History of Merchant Shipping on the Great Lakes. John Brian, recently retired from 25+ years as a merchant marine deck officer on the Great Lakes

December: - Off for the Holidays

January 21st: - Downtown Traverse City Development, 1950 – Present. Russ Soyring, Traverse City City Planner

February 18th: History of Clinch Park. Jenny Loup, University of Michigan degree in History; former employee at Clinch Park Zoo.

March 18th: History of Traverse City Area Public Schools. Sharon Jennings, long-time TAHS member; retired TCAPS elementary teacher.

April 15th: Oral History Vignettes from local Traverse City figures: Organized by Jenny Loup

May 20th: Fishing in the Grand Traverse Area. Speakers to be Determined

Opportunities for Volunteers

Would you like to...

1. Help out at the archives under the supervision of Amy Barritt, special collections librarian (see her report in this issue for possibilities)?
2. Write an article about history or nature for the Grand Traverse Journal?
3. Explore ways of getting local history into the schools?
4. Serve on a board committee to work on such projects as newsletters, mailings, programming or maintaining the website?
5. Attend TAHS board meetings to find out more about board activities and what you might do to participate?

6. Consider being a program presenter at an upcoming monthly program at TADL?

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

Leave an email at 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>.