

MAY 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 February newsletter, we took a brief hiatus from our monthly programs. In part this was due to a lack of presenters. We sent out a request for speakers through our email blast and I am happy to report that we have scheduled several programs for next year.

A full schedule will be shared via our email blast and be featured in our next newsletter. Also, if you would like to present a program on a topic of local or even national history, please contact us at [**traversehistory@gmail.com**](mailto:traversehistory@gmail.com) - We are always glad to show off our local historians to the public.

Our final program of the spring was held on Sunday, May 21st at 2:00 PM at the McGuire Room at the Traverse Area District Library.

Professor Steven Walton of Michigan Technological University presented on the history of the Parsons Corporation. The Parsons Corporation, which came to Traverse City during World War II, is a stand-out part of Traverse City's industrial history. Manufacturers of bombs and landmines for the military, pressed metal kitchen built-ins, and many of the rotor blades for the first generation of helicopters, Parsons eventually moved into fiberglass boats and engineering consulting for aerospace, naval, and data industries. Their development of numerically-controlled (NC) machining here in Traverse City is a globally notable achievement, yet one that left little footprint here; on the other hand, the development and recruitment of industrial firms to the city certainly has. Parsons epitomizes the transformation of industry in Traverse City after WWII from local to national and from consumer products to industrial and consulting work.

In addition to his presentation, Professor Walton engaged with the audience who included Parsons family members and those who had worked at Parsons Corporation. This led to a rich discussion that was helpful for learning more about the history of industry in the area. The presentation was well attended. Forty people attended in person and another dozen or so attended via Zoom.

For those who wish to access to the recording of the presentation and discussion, the Traverse Area District Library's recording is found at [**https://youtu.be/pDgvvUODZ2g**](https://youtu.be/pDgvvUODZ2g)

In addition to programming, several society board and members participated in the Michigan History Day at West Middle School in March. We had the pleasure of serving as judges, evaluating wonderful student projects, including exhibits, documentaries, posters, websites, and papers. The quality of the projects was shown in that several of the projects advanced from the district to the state finals. Seven have even advanced to the national finals. These include projects on such topics as the Navajo Code Talkers, Socrates, the Matchgirls' Rebellion, the history of anesthesia, the formation of American political parties, and the history of the Radium Girls. Your society covers the entire registration fees of all our local students at the state and national competition levels. We will invite these young scholars to present at our annual meeting in October

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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

Finally, our tour season is beginning 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 on the time and dates of this new tour will be forthcoming in our email blast announcements soon. The cost of the tour is **\$15** per person and comfortable shoes are recommended.

FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

Dear Members,

Our membership is currently at 145. Although sadly not hearing back from some past members, we are happy to report we have a good showing of new members. These include Katherine Anderson, Patricia Lustig, Robert Arfstrom, Richard Talbert, Joshua Jacobson, Grexit LLC, Alyse Sandborn, and Thomas Haydock. Welcome all! Thank you to all who are spreading the word of all the hard work we are doing to keep the history of this wonderful area alive! We are still looking for members who have family ties to Traverse City. In this newsletter we feature the Don Ehrenberger Family. I know you will enjoy his family's story. Let us know if we can honor your family in our next addition, The stories of our early citizens deserve to be told!

Contact me at ***sharon2331@gmail.com*** - I will be looking forward to hearing from you!

FAMILY HISTORY OF JOSEPH E. EHRENBERGER

By Don Ehrenberger

Joseph E. Ehrenberger was the second oldest of 5 children of Frank and Frances Ehrenberger. Coming from the small village of Trhonic, Bohemia they immigrated to the US, landing in Baltimore, MD in 1887 when Joe was 7 years old.

Sponsored by the Wilhelm family, they settled in Traverse City. In 1911, Joe and his best friend Bill Nash opened the Nash-Ehrenberger Grocery Store. Shortly after, the building was moved to the SW corner of Front and Division in the Slabtown neighborhood on the west side of town. Many walked to the store to shop and store employees would deliver their purchases. In 1914, Bill Nash moved to Lansing, MI and Joe continued the store until he retired in 1956. Joe helped his customers during the depression and after. Many still had outstanding debts when the store closed. Joe collected those account books and burned them in a fire. His motto was,

“we hate to charge our friends but it’s our friends that shop here.”

The store property was sold to Scamehorn Shell where there became gas stations at each corner of Front and Division. It is now the location of a surgical medical building.



Store from about 1911

Joe was also very active in Traverse City politics. He served on the Traverse City Commission during the 1940's, including 1 term as Mayor. Joe also was a founding member (1921) and officer of the Evergreen Beach Property Owners which became the Long Lake Association, one of Michigan's oldest riparian groups.

He married the former Gladys Buckner also in 1911 and raised two sons; Joseph and Clarence (Jake) Joe (Jr) served on the Traverse City Police force for number of years before retiring as Captain. Clarence worked for Davis Electric in town. Joe (Sr) passed away in April, 1964 at the age of 82.

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FAMILY HISTORY OF JOSEPH E. EHRENBERGER CONTINUED

By Don Ehrenberger



*NCR Cash register
(until recently at Wildflower in Glen Arbor)*



Joe Ehrenberger & Bill Nash



Joe E. in suit. Team mgr. and shortstop



Store front at retirement 1956



*Joe E. reflecting on
retirement 1956*



*Joe E (5th left) Bill N. (6th from left) Others are Percy Stanley,
Frank E., Clark Kellogg, C.M. Buell, Ole Boggie(?), Mr. Castle*

FROM TREASURER OFFENHAUSER'S DESK

Thanks to careful planning, the Society is on solid financial ground. Once again, in 2023, we are assisting the intern program for archive cataloging at the library. Also we have recently made major disbursements for the production of monuments for the Anishinaabe history project.

Our members support has been a vital part of these activities and, for that, we thank them.

NEWS ON THE KCHI WIIKWEDONG ANISHINAABE HISTORY PROJECT

By Emily Modrall



The Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project gratefully reports that all five municipalities approached -- Traverse City, the Village of Suttons Bay, the Village of Northport, Leland Township, and Leelanau Township -- have approved the installation of new Project-related signage at identified sites on municipal property. City, Village, and Township staff have been extremely generous with their time and efforts to move the Project's proposals through these approval processes. The signs are the product of the Project's work over the last two years and mark Anishinaabe trails and other points of historical significance. Several of the signs have already been fabricated (see photo); the text plaques will be finalized and attached this summer and the first batch of signs will be ready for installation by autumn.

NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

**By Michele Howard, TADL Director, and Melissa A. McKenna, Department Head,
Adult Services Supervisor, Local History Collection**

Calling All Citizen Historians!

TADL is thrilled to say we're ready to accept volunteers to help with the Local History Collection! Adults Services Department Head and LHC Supervisor Melissa McKenna and LHC Library Assistant Robin Stanley presented an information session about the Local History Collection and volunteering on March 18th. Sixteen of your neighbors attended to learn how they could become part of TADL's Citizen Historian program and the types of projects that are available to work on.

Now TADL is ready for the next steps, which are the individual project training sessions. Those are scheduled at the beginning of June. If you'd like to be a part of this group who will be helping to tell the story of Grand Traverse County, please be sure to first watch the Information Session recording and then register for training with whatever project most interests you!

The training sessions will be held in-person at the library in the Thirlby Room on the second floor. But you can also join us online through Zoom. Please be sure to register to attend either in-person or online. And if you're not able to join us live, recordings of the sessions will be available on the library's YouTube channel within a week of the original program date.

So what are the projects? There are two that can be done entirely online - tagging photographs and transcribing documents in the online collection. And one that will happen in the Reference Dept - inventorying the historical pamphlet files. Clicking on the links will take you to the registration page for that training session. There are only 20 spots available in each session for in-person, so be sure to sign up soon! There are an unlimited number of spots in Zoom for each training, so if your session is full, please plan to attend online instead.

And just so you know how important this work is, we'd like to share some statistics with you. The Local History pages on TADL's website had over 480 users and over 51,000 image views just in the last month. People want to access the history of the region and by assisting us with these projects, especially the online ones, you'll be helping to make that possible for people all over the world. Their lives may have taken them elsewhere, but through the work of our Citizen Historians, we can make sure everyone knows about their Traverse City roots!

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 | LIKE US ON FACEBOOK: TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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