

FEBRUARY 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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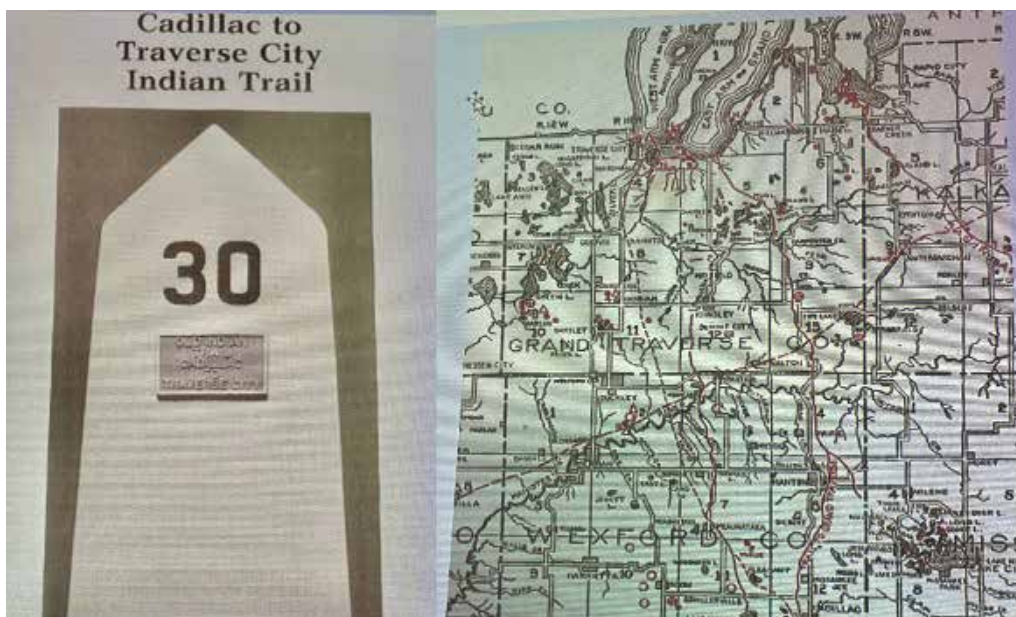
Jim Warner

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

We had two programs since our November Newsletter. Our November program was provided by newly elected board member, Dr. Emily Modrall. Emily presented on “Old Indian Trails” and the Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project. Her presentation included a summary of research and project activities to date. As the project coordinator, Emily also discussed several specific topics in regional nineteenth-century history, including the “Old Indian Trails” in the Grand Traverse area. Her research has included studying the written historical accounts of the period and engaging with Native elders and language experts to enrich the knowledge about the early European settlements and interchange with the Native peoples already living in the area.



Trail Marker #30

Map of Indian Trails (in red)

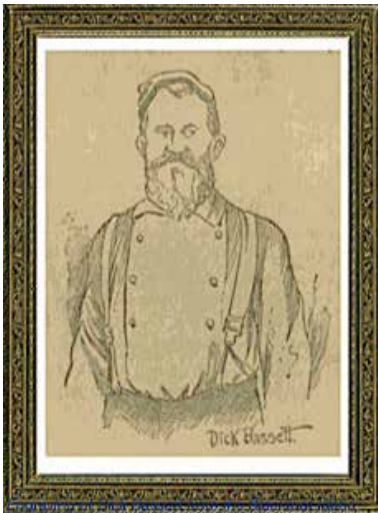
The goal of the project is both to bring more attention and awareness to the existing 33 trail markers and to the broader Anishinaabe history of this region. The project will include providing bilingual historical plaques giving historical context for the trail. The project has been made possible with support of several organizations: the Traverse Area Historical Society, Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, Leelanau Historical Society, Omena Historical Society, Rotary Charities, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, Native American Heritage Fund, Michigan Humanities Council and Hagerty Corporate Giving Program.

CONTINUED

FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

The program was held in person at the McGuire Room in the Traverse Area District Library and made available on Zoom. It was well attended with 13 attendees on Zoom and 37 in person. The Library recorded it and the video can be found at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5nq-BdsRNbs>



News, October 31, 1891

Drawing of Dick Bassett

The second program was held in January. Writer and educator Jordan Owen presented on 'The Mostly True Story of Dick Bassett: Traverse City's First Celebrity.' Jordan presented his extensive historical research on Traverse Bay's own hermit Dick Bassett, a Civil War veteran who became a viral celebrity in an age of new media -- the 1890s. He provided a fuller picture of the man who homesteaded the small island on the bay that would come to bear his name and how he became a figure of national fascination.

Based on his research, Jordan identified Bassett as a First Lieutenant in Company I of the 5th Iowa who was in several of the main engagements of the Western Theater of the Civil War. After the war, he may have gone west but was on the island that bears his name by 1876. He engaged in fruit and vegetable farming and in ice harvesting and fishing as well as lumberjacking.



In the 1880s, The Michigan Tradesman sparked the beginning of stories about him that created him into a national phenomenon.

CONTINUED

FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.



Bassett Island in the Nineteenth Century

By 1900, he was seeking ownership of the island which he acquired a year later only to sell his island in 1902 for \$2500. Jordan then shared the history of the island after Bassett left it for good.

The program was held in person at the McGuire Room in the Traverse Area District Library and made available on zoom. We had a great turnout with 22 attendees on zoom and 38 in person. The Library recorded the presentation and is available at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2MXeCZDQOoc>

FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

Dear Members,

Our membership currently stands at 144 and we are hoping to see this number grow in the coming year. Please encourage any of your "history minded" family or friends to join us in our endeavor to keep the history of this wonderful area alive. And welcome to our newest member, Fred Tank!

We still are looking for members who have family ties to Traverse City's history. We would love to hear from you so we could highlight your family. We often wonder when folks from other places around the country join us, what their ties are to this area. All we need is a few sentences telling of your connection. Email Sharon Jennings (sharon2331@gmail.com) or send a note to

TAHS PO Box7051 Traverse City, MI 49696 - We'll be looking forward to hearing from you!

Thank you to all our loyal members who have supported us not only through their dues but with their generous donations! We couldn't do this without you!!!

FROM TREASURER BOWERS' DESK

I can't believe it has been another year and 2022 is over. With the generous support from our members and the community the Traverse Area Historical Society was able to fund some amazing programs. The society continued to support the historical archives at TADL, as well as supporting students who competed in the Michigan History Day Competition, both at the State and National level. This year we were able to reinstate both our Petertyl Internship and the seasonal walking tours. We even added a new tour led by our own board member Marty MacLeod. The society has also continued to be the fiduciary for Emily Modrall's Native American Signage project. Thank you for your continued interest and support which allows us to preserve, protect, and present the local history in the Traverse Area.

NEWS ON THE KCHI WIIKWEDONG ANISHINAABE HISTORY PROJECT

The Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project's signage design was approved by the Traverse City Parks & Recreation Commission this month, a critical step in the sign fabrication and installation process. Signs will be fabricated over the course of this winter and early spring with installation now planned for late summer or early autumn. The signs will convey some of the teachings and history of the Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabek.

In December, the project was grateful to be awarded a grant from the Grand Traverse Regional Community Foundation towards the completion of the project's objectives.

NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY By Michele Howard, TADL Director

If you've visited our website lately, you might have noticed some changes. Thanks to the dedicated work of Scott Morey, Assistant Director of Technology Services, TADL has a new website! The initiative was directly related to a major goal of the TADL Strategic Plan to make the library more accessible which our new website does. Kudos to Scott and his staff.

You might have also noticed if you've been looking around our Local History site, <https://localhistory.tadl.org/> are about 2,000 new items contributed to our database by Mary Morgan from the Peninsula Community Library. If you go to our website and click on Browse Collections you'll see a white range of new information including Peninsula Community Library Local History Talks, Peninsula Community Library Cavasos Family Historical Photograph Collection, and pictures from the Old Mission Peninsula School. Thank you to Scott Morey and Amy Barritt, Kingsley Branch Manager for their work to get Mary up and running. Rumors are that some letters will be added that are sure to be interesting and of important historical value.

I am thankful to have so many people who are committed to preserving our region's history!

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

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