

FALL 2024

PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND PRESENT



TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Traverse Area Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly.

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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 last newsletter in May, we have resumed our monthly programs in September and continued three historic tour programs in Traverse City.

For our September program, Deborah Richmond, the tribal historian of the Burt Lake Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians, presented on historic and tragic event in the band's history – the Burt Lake Burnout of 1900.

In this presentation, Richmond discussed the difficult story of how the Native American village at Burt Lake in Brutus, Michigan, was mercilessly reduced to ashes, rendering families homeless and stripping them of their ancestral lands, by a wealthy land developer and the local sheriff.

The presentation began with the historic background of federal relations with the Native American tribes. She started with the Treaty of Washington in 1836. The Band leader, Shin-gos-se-moon, negotiated the best arrangement the situation allowed.

Richmond pointed out that the treaty promised one thousand acres as well as blacksmith and educational services forever.

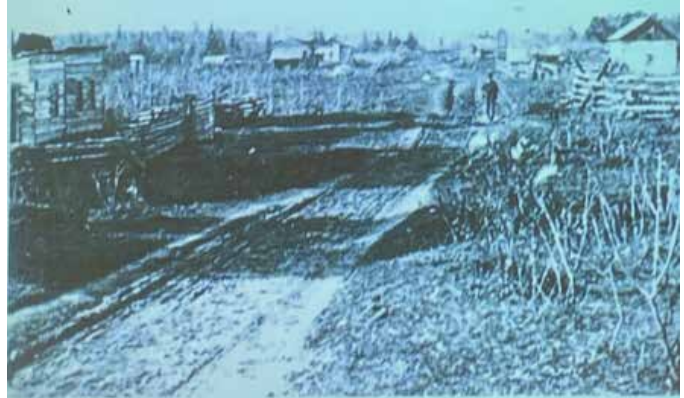
Unfortunately, the United States Senate unilaterally changed the agreement and limited the time duration to just five years and reduced the land grant. This was followed by local white settler encroachment on the Native land, forcing the Band to purchase the land that they already owned under their treaty rights.



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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

Tragically, local officials continued to make efforts to confiscate the Native land through bogus claims of using tax liens. Ultimately, when these efforts were insufficient to remove the Band from their land, violence were used. On October 15, 1900, the local sheriff with a gang under his direction, burnt the entire community's twenty cabins, forcing the band to go homeless without any provisions or subsequent shelter.



Burt Lake Band Community prior to 1900

These events were brought to the attention of the federal government and before the local federal court system, but no relief or justice was provided the Band. The Band has nevertheless continued, maintaining their culture and striving for federal recognition. Find out more information about the Burt Lake Band at their website:

<https://burtlakeband.org/>

Seventeen people enjoyed the program in person and six others joined us on Zoom. For those interested in viewing the recording of the presentation, please go to this link:

<https://youtu.be/oX7OwAB3aKg>

Our next program will be our October Program on **Sunday, October 13**, starting at **2:00PM** in the **McGuire Room** at the **Traverse Area District Library**. Please join us for our October program for presentations by our local Michigan State History Day national finalists on their experiences at the national competition in Washington, D.C.

These presentations will be followed by an extended social time with some serious refreshments and fun interactive displays. Get to know your fellow history enthusiasts while challenging your knowledge of local history!

Following this event will be a brief annual business meeting that will include a short state of the society report, a 2025 Budget announcement, and the Board members election.

If you are unable to attend in person, the Library provides a zoom link **HERE**.

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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

In addition to our programs, we have offered three different tours this summer. In addition to our Oakwood Cemetery tour led by Larry Hains, Marty MacLeod has provided the walking tour of TC's Old Towne, and she and Peg Siciliano have also offered the tour entitled: Perry Hannah and His Neighbors, A Walking Tour of Sixth Street and Environs.

The following tours are still available:

- *Traverse City's Old Towne Tour on Saturday, October 4th starting at 9:30AM*
- *Oakwood Cemetery Tour, October 6th, starting at 4:00PM*
- *Oakwood Cemetery Tour with a Halloween Twist, on October 26th and 27th, starting at 2:00PM*

FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

Our membership stands at 155 active members. We are happy to welcome David Tompkins of Northport, Paul Dechow of Maple City, Brian Maher of Birmingham, and Dennis Plautz and Dr. David Martin of Traverse City to our history family. As you can see our members come from all over to help us keep the history of this area alive. If you have family or friends who live out of town and have connections to here, please invite them to join in our efforts. Thank you to all our loyal and longtime members for your valued support!

We are still hoping to hear from our members whose families have connections to the history of this area. Please contact me if you would be willing to share your family's story at

sharon2331@gmail.com

FROM TREASURER OFFENHAUSER'S DESK

The Society is in the midst of our 2025 budget review. As compared to this year's budget, no significant changes are anticipated. We look forward to submitting our new budget at our next membership meeting in October. While all major expenses have been met for this year, we are now receiving valuable income from our popular tours. The fiscal health of the Society is sound.

NEWS ON THE KCHI WIIKWEDONG ANISHINAABE HISTORY PROJECT

By Emily Modrall

The Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project is preparing for an October round of sign installations. When the signs are in the ground, the website will be live and linked to the signs via QR codes at each sign site.

NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

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

Happy Fall from your library! We've had a busy summer in the Local History Collection and we think you'll like what we've done and what we're going to be doing.

The two summer Petertyl Local History Interns began their session with us in early July, after a brief interview process. Melodie Middaugh is currently pursuing her undergraduate degree in library science through the University of Mississippi online and Holly Galligan is in the middle of obtaining her undergraduate degree in history from Northern Michigan University.

Once again this year, Terry Beamsley, formerly of Henry Ford Museum, assisted us by providing the formal training section of the internship schedule. Robin Stanley supervised their work on the collection she had identified for their hands-on project work. Melissa organized their schedule and reached out to secure a field trip to the Benzie County Historical Society for the interns to be able to experience an archive outside of a library setting. The interns spent their class time learning about the basics of archives and, during their hands-on time in the LHC, the techniques used to store materials properly and how to make them accessible.

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NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

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

Melodie and Holly organized and created a finding aid for the LHC's Maud Miller Hoffmaster collection. Hoffmaster was, as you all know, a well regarded local artist who was also an environmentalist that loved children. The LHC Hoffmaster collection includes, not only 9 original oil paintings by the artist and 2 prints, but also a large amount of photographs, correspondence, and biographical material provided by the artist's friend, Deborah Kohn. They gave a nice presentation about their work to TADL staff and interested TAHS Board members at the conclusion of their internship. Their work will soon be added to the online list of finding aids on the TADL Local History website.

In addition to the wonderful efforts of the interns, TADL staff worked very hard this summer to locate and engage the services of an art appraiser for the purpose of assessing the art collection of the library. Included in the assessment were the 11 Hoffmaster pieces. The completion of this task allows us to move one step closer to creating a community exhibition of Hoffmaster works in late spring 2025. Melissa has already reached out to the Denno's Museum to inquire about a possible loan of their Hoffmaster art for this exhibit and received a positive response. So look for more about this in early 2025!

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

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