

WINTER 2025

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 October, we had our annual meeting later that month and had a final monthly program in November. We also concluded our historic tours with two Oakwood Cemetery with a Halloween Twist tours. We will resume our monthly programs in January.

For our October program, three Michigan History Day scholars who were national finalists presented on their experiences in the multi-level competition that brought them to Washington D.C. The presenters were:

Makaio Ireland was a TCAPS Montessori 8th Grader when he competed. At the National finals, his research presentation won the "Best Entry in Naval or Maritime History." He discussed his research paper on The Battle of Hampton Roads: American Inventions Crush British Tradition. He showed how the advent of ironclads made the British wooden fleet obsolete in the late nineteenth century.



At the Battle of Hampton Roads, Va., the hours-long engagement between the USS Monitor and the CSS Virginia ended in a draw but demonstrated the dawn of a new era of naval technology. Louis Prang & Co., Bos. Library of Congress

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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

Cicily Primo and Isabelle Poole were TC West Middle School 8th Graders when they competed. Their project was a group exhibit project entitled "The Fire that Sparked Change: The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire." They provided an overview of how this tragedy led to important legislation to protect workers in the future. They also provided a slideshow on their experiences in Washington, D.C.



Demonstrators protesting the tragic loss of life from the Factory Fire

One was identifying the ghost towns in our area. These included twelve different towns such as Archie, Beitner, Monroe Center and Wormwood Corner. The other game asked attendees to identify nine different places and nine different people from historic photographs along with helpful hints that were provided. Locations included the city's first gas station and the original version of Traverse City's tallest hotel, and people included the Civil War veteran who lived to 108 and Northern Michigan's first female physician.

These enjoyable activities were followed by our annual meeting. I provided the state of the society report. It follows here:

"Since our last annual meeting, we have met our society mission in presenting history through offering seven monthly programs. These included:

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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

November: Nancy Bordine shared her passion for fashion in an engaging timeline of “the way they wore.” She discussed women’s fashions from the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, connecting it to the history of Traverse City.

January: Christopher Reiser explored the life of Rev. Peter Dougherty and the early nineteenth century on the Old Mission and Leelanau Peninsulas.

February: Jeffrey Jaeger presented a critical analysis of General Custer’s performance at the battle of Rio Hill and its implications for his final defeat at Little Big Horn.

March: Peg Siciliano presented on the changing face of visitor accommodations in our area in her talk “Rutted dirt to Interstates: Tents to Motels: How Roads and Lodging Changed between 1910 and 1970.

April: Virginia LeClaire presented on early nursing in the Grand Traverse Region, focusing on the Traverse City State Hospital Training School for Nurses.

May: Robert Downes presented on Native American history of our region, focusing on how the Federal government failed to fulfill the treaty rights of our Indian neighbors starting with the first treaties in 1830s and continuing through the modern era.

September: Deborah Richmond presented on the tragic history of the Burt Lake Community and how the Native land was stolen from them.

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.

Another important way of presenting history is through the Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project coordinated by Dr. Emily Modrall.

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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

Finally, we have given support of the Michigan History Day Program on its Students. 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 national finals. The presentations today give you a wonderful example of these young scholars' work.

Much thanks to all of you who help us meet our mission of preserving, presenting and protecting the history of our Grand Traverse Region.

My annual report was followed with the presentation of our proposed 2025 budget. Its most significant change was that our society is going to rent a second storage unit to house three dimensional historic artifacts to protect them. Our goal will be to preserve them until a history museum can be established in Traverse City.

We concluded our annual meeting with election of offices. Larry Hains and I were reelected, and Marilyn Johns was elected for her first term. Thirty-one society and community members attended our program. Here is the link for the October program: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lgssur12f1g>

Our November program was entitled Clues, Tidbits and Surprises in Researching Leelanau History." Our presenter will be Kim Kelderhouse, Executive Director, Leelanau Historical Society.

During her presentation Kim shared unique stories and discoveries from her 11 years working for the Leelanau Historical Society. Kim is the descendent of Thomas P. Kelderhouse, one of the first settlers of Port Oneida. Her passion for history stems from her own personal connections to Leelanau's past but has grown to encompass the interconnection of the Grand Traverse Region.

Kelderhouse provide several wonderful stories about important figures in Leelanau history and about new collections that tell that history. Among the individuals she highlighted was Risdon Orange. He provided the first accurate survey of the county in 1850 and is noted for including the Native American sites in his survey.



Kelderhouse also shared how historical research corrects common misconceptions. For instance, the name of Leelanau County had been believed to be an Indian word meaning "Land of Delight."

Surveyor Risdon Orange



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FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

In fact, the county name was not an Indian word. The county was named by Indian Agent Henry Schoolcraft, who honored his wife and noted poet Jane Johnston Schoolcraft by using her pen name to name the county.

Kelderhouse also noted new collections have helped to provide images of the past. For instance, a photographic collection of Fred Samuelson provides wonderful images of North Manitou Island.



Jane Johnston Schoolcraft



Ladies in a Boat at North Manitou Island

The program was attended by thirty-eight community members in person and an additional nineteen on Zoom. The recording of the presentation can be found at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loQgGai_k68

Our Spring Program Schedule is set. All programs (except April) are on the third Sunday of each month from January through May. The programs are all held in the McGuire Room at the Traverse Area District Library.

January 19th: Marty MacLeod will present on Legacy: Perry Hannah and his Neighbors.

February 16th: Zoë Schwartz will present on Julius Steinberg, the Bargain Giver: From Peddler to Opera House Proprietor and Beyond

March 16th: Valerie Winans will present on the life of Michigan Governor Edwin B. Winans

April 13 or 27thth: Grace Yakuber will present on the history of the Traverse City Airport

May 18th: Peg Siciliano will present on Traverse City: Boom and Bust: Our Economy and the Bay

FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR JENNINGS' DESK

The TAHS membership now stands at 140 members. We'd like to welcome new members Kathleen Moore, Nadeen Kieren, Annie Lutes, Brad Gills, and Joy Donnellon.

Our goal is to increase our membership, so we have more people involved in keeping our local history alive. To do so, we are asking our current members to spread the word about how valuable this society is to our community.

This is an exciting time for us as we have great programs lined up for 2025, interesting tours and some other exciting plans yet to be revealed. We are asking our members to attend our events and bring a friend or give a TAHS membership as a gift to someone who enjoys learning about local history. We need your help to spread the good news of our mission and help us grow.

A huge thank you to our members who have not only joined but make additional donations to support our endeavors. We couldn't do all we do without your help!

We are still looking for members who have family connections to our history. We'd love to tell your family's story! Contact Sharon Jennings (sharon2331@gmail.com)

FROM TREASURER OFFENHAUSER'S DESK

2024 ended with the Society in good financial health, meeting all our budgetary goals, and in some instances exceeding them. We are on solid fiscal footing.

The Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project is in its later phases. 2024 saw the completion of the concept/design efforts, and its fabrication. Some of the installation expense has been met, and more is anticipated this coming spring. There are ample funds for this restricted fund project to fulfil its completion.

The unrestricted portion of our finances is in good shape. On the income side we had book sales, presentations, the popular tours. This important income also helps us to meet one of our missions-- "to present". Also our membership dues and donations, and outside grants, have continued to support our society.

We enter 2025 with renewed appreciation of our friends for their continued interest and support of our activities.

NEWS ON THE KCHI WIIKWEDONG ANISHINAABE HISTORY PROJECT

By Emily Modrall

The Kchi Wiikwedong Anishinaabe History Project has installed two more signs. One was installed in Suttons Bay and the other in Traverse City. When the signs are in the ground, the website will be live and linked to the signs via QR codes at each sign site.



Sign installed at the Suttons Bay Library



Sign installed at Clinch Park in Traverse City



The detailed image of the sign at Clinch Park

NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

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

Happy 2025 from your Library! We had a wonderful 2024 in the Local History Collection and 2025 is shaping up to be even better!

I first want to say “Thank You” to everyone who came out to the December City Commissioners meeting in support of TADL taking over the lease for the Carnegie building on 6th St. We were not surprised that the vote extended Crooked Tree’s lease, but it was a disappointment. However, letting everyone know that the other organizations have interest in that building and urging the city to move forward with their plan to better determine how the city’s properties are rented and utilized is still a step in the direction we want to go. Rest assured, that TADL is absolutely dedicated to moving forward with helping to establish a place where local history is celebrated and able to be visited by the community at large. Many thanks to TAHS for joining us in this endeavor.

Please join me in welcoming a new full-time employee to the Local History Collection staff. Many of you may remember Zoe Schwartz from their stint as a Petertyl intern in the summer of 2023, or from their excellent blog posts on Traverse City history for the LHC web page. Zoe is now working as a Library Assistant in the LHC, taking over the position held by Robin Stanley. But don’t worry that Robin has gone anywhere. I’m happy to report that Robin has been promoted to a new position as Curator of the Local History Collection at TADL. This is the most staff that the library has been able to dedicate to the LHC thus far and demonstrates TADL’s commitment to maintaining and improving the archives. We are so excited for what we’ll be able to accomplish in 2025!

As part of Robin’s new role in the department, there will be a revamped volunteer program coming soon. Please be on the lookout for an invitation coming in February.

I am also moving forward to plan the exhibition of Maud Miller Hoffmaster paintings at TADL for this summer. The Library’s Summer Reading theme this year is “Color Your World” and MMH certainly did that for Northwestern Michigan. It seems like a perfect time to share her art with the community. If you have a painting that you would be willing to lend the library for the duration of the exhibition - drop off in early June, pick up in early August - please email mmckenna@tadl.org.

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

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