

SPRING 2026

PRESERVE, PROTECT, AND PRESENT



# TRAVERSE AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Traverse Area Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly.

## BOARD MEMBERS

Stephen Siciliano

- *President*

Marty MacLeod

- *Vice President*

Jen Loop

- *Secretary*

Jeff Offenhauser

- *Treasurer*

---

Bradley Gills

Larry Hains

Marilyn Johns

Emily Modrall

Jordan Owen

Peg Siciliano

Jim Warner

## INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

- **From President Siciliano's Desk**
  - *Recent Programs & the Society's Annual Meeting*
- **Tour Volunteers Needed**
- **Spring Programs and Summer Tour Schedule**
- **From the Desks' of Our Board Members & Much More!**

## FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK

---

**S**ince our winter newsletter edition, we have devoted our time to our programs and lending support to the Traverse Area District Library efforts to expand research and archives services to the Carnegie Building.

---

Currently, our greatest need is for volunteers to serve as our tour guides this coming summer:

### **Tour Volunteers Needed:**

Hone your local history knowledge, get in your steps for the day, and enjoy Traverse City's beautiful outdoors: Volunteer as a TAHS Tour Guide this summer!

A basic knowledge of our local history would be helpful but is not required, as scripts for all three walking tours are written and ready to go. While it may sound daunting, current tour guides will help you prepare thoroughly with "on-the-job" training, starting this June.

Take your choice of one (or more!) of our current tours:

- Oakwood Cemetery (History of the three cemeteries and famous "residents")
- Perry Hannah & His Neighbors (Sixth Street architecture and the people who built these turn-of-the-century gems, plus Central School)
- All Over Old Towne (All facets of this fascinating neighborhood, from Sixth to 12th Street, Union to Boardman Lake, about 1.7 miles)

We offer each tour once or twice a month, usually mid-June through mid-October, on Saturday or Sunday mornings. They all run about 2 hours, for a maximum of 10 participants (but often fewer). There's usually a mix of tourists and local folks, but they're always fun and engaged.

Training starts in June (details forthcoming with the summer schedule), and we ask that you commit to four or five tours each season. Yes, it IS a chunk of your valuable time, but the satisfaction of sharing and witnessing people's delight in learning TC's unique story is its own reward.

Don't miss this wonderful opportunity to give back to your community--we promise you'll enjoy it!

CONTINUED

---

## FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

---

### **Summer Tour Schedule:**

Our schedule for the summer tours is as follows:

#### **Perry Hannah**

June 20, Saturday, 9:30-11:30  
July 18, Saturday, 9:30-11:30  
August 15, Saturday, 9:30-11:30  
September 26, Saturday, 9:30-11:30

#### **Old Towne**

June 14, Sunday, 9:30-11:30  
July 19, Sunday, 9:30-11:30  
August 9, Sunday, 9:30-11:30  
September 20, Sunday, 9:30-11:30

#### **Oakwood Cemetery**

June 28, Sunday, 3 - 5pm  
July 26, Sunday, 3 - 5pm  
August 23, Sunday, 3 - 5pm  
September 27, Sunday, 3 - 5pm

Please take advantage of these wonderful tours. The price of the tours remains at \$15 per person for this year.

### **Spring 2026 Programs:**

Regarding our Spring 2026 programs, we have offered two of these in April and May.

Unfortunately, our March program to be presented by Dr. Bradley Gills on "Why rock the boat? Tribal fishing in the Grand Traverse Region" was cancelled when the Library closed that day because of the tremendous snowstorm that buried the region that weekend. But the good news is that the program is being rescheduled as our September program.

CONTINUED

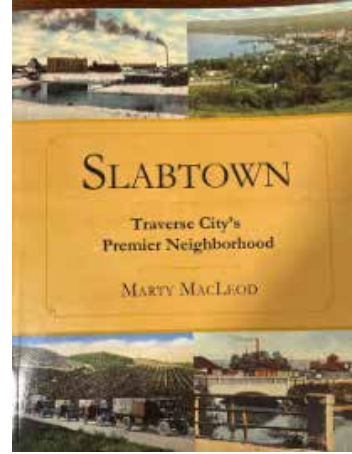
---

## FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

April Program: Marty MacLeod, The Cradle of Traverse City: Slabtown

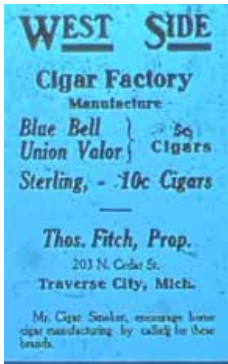
Based in part on her recent book, Slabtown, Traverse City's Premier Neighborhood, Marty MacLeod traced the history of the West Side.

She described with enjoyable stories the what--and who--that helped to transform that first shanty town into the vibrant neighborhood of today. First attracted by the lumber business and later by converted farmland, people came to Traverse City and to Slabtown to work and live. The particular ethnic group that immigrated to the area were Bohemians from Central Europe.



They initially built houses made of slab lumber but later built more substantial homes. The residents also engaged in downtown businesses.

These included working at the cigar making factory for low wages or establishing grocery businesses.



There was also an ample supply of taverns. Among the longest lasting one to today is Sleders Tavern on Randolph Street established in 1894.

CONTINUED

## FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO'S DESK CONT.

---



The residents of Slabtown also develop cultural organizations and established churches. These included the Czech and Slovak Protective Society and the Immaculate Conception Catholic church established in 1903.

The audience thoroughly enjoyed the presentation and asked several questions. The program established a new record attendance of fifty-five in person attendees and nineteen viewing the program via zoom. A recording of the program can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OjLl0gK3Ka8>

May Program: Jordan Owen, Hidden in Plain Sight: The Carter Mill

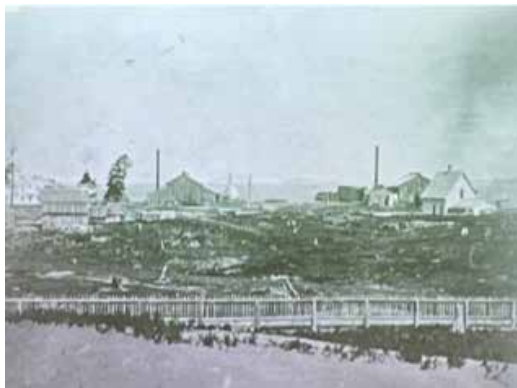
Board member and local historian Jordan Owen's presentation uncovered the forgotten story of the West Bay waterfront—a location whose unique history has played a pivotal role in shaping the industrial and social landscape of the Leelanau shore of West Grand Traverse Bay over the past 150 years. Nestled on a familiar waterfront property that has been in constant use since 1877, the Carter Mill stood as the forgotten fourth bayfront lumber mill. The mill and the occupants that followed would form the foundation for the "Lower Greilickville" community, which continues to thrive and evolve to this day.

The first entrepreneur that started the history of the area was Thomas Cutter who built a steam mill in 1851.

---

CONTINUED

## FROM PRESIDENT SICILIANO’S DESK CONT.



The original mill on the left and “Big” mill on the right

He sold the property to Reuben Goodrich, who became the Traverse City Land Office Receiver during the Lincoln administration, partnered in store enterprises in Northport and put in a new dock.



Reuben Goodrich

At Carter’s Mill he established a lime kiln that sold lime that helped in building the State Asylum. He was followed others, most noted Dan Carter.



Dan Carter



Carter Mill during Dan Carter’s ownership

Carter was an inventor and upgraded the technology of the mill. Among his inventions was the Victory Chair in the 1880s.



Victory Chair Advertisement

Other inventors followed. Among them was Herbert Montague who patented the Montamower, an early twentieth century lawn mower.



Herbert Montague Montamower Advertisement



The enterprise lasted to the early 1960s after which the Grand Traverse Yacht Club purchased and rehabilitated the property to the beautiful facility it is today.



Grand Traverse Yacht Club Today

In short, Carter Mill has been the home of the combination of inventive entrepreneurship and its many uses of its important geography.

The presentation was followed by several questions and was enjoyed by thirty-eight attendees. Unfortunately, due to technical issues, the presentation was not available on zoom or recorded.

### FROM MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE JORDAN OWEN'S DESK

---

True to form, spring has been a season of renewal, with the re-commitment of many of our members to the mission and works of TAHS.

Currently, our active community comprises 148 members, including 122 individual annual members and 26 life members. With 18 renewals in April and May, your support provides continuity across the society's works, including archival and research projects, preservation efforts, and seasonal community initiatives.

Thank you for your participation, curiosity, and for choosing to be stewards of the legacy of our community.

---

### FROM COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE CHAIR SICILIANO'S DESK

---

We are pleased to report that we are well on our way to using the \$2,000 grant the TAHS received from the Historical Society of Michigan. Archival quality storage materials and environmental monitoring equipment have been purchased and are ready for use. By the time you read this our new shelving most likely will have been purchased and set up. And soon after that our precious artifact collection will be placed on them for safe keeping and convenient access.

More good news! Recent additions to the collection include, but are not limited to:

- \*\*Glass Milk Bottles from Ideal Dairy, Cloverdale and Progressive Dairies, and Maxbauer's Creamery
- \*\*Petertyl Drug ruler with advertising
- \*\*Traverse City Iron Works double set of playing cards
- \*\*A paper weight (incorporating a small pinball game : ) from the Boston Department Store
- \*\*A Michigan Starch Company box that contained Nordstharnan Flour, with advertising in both English and Czechoslovakian.
- \*\*A Cone Drive 1/4-Century Club belt buckle and case
- \*\*Red Mill Lumber Company advertising thimble
- \*\*Dog House restaurant plastic key tag
- \*\*Traverse City State Bank advertising pocketknife and pouch
- \*\*JW Slater tin plate with Teddy Roosevelt teddy bear design
- \*\*People Savings bank check book

Remember! The TAHS is now collecting three-dimensional museum artifacts for safe storage and occasional display until such time that Traverse City again has a regular Museum program.

If you have something to donate, please contact us at [\*\*traversehistory@gmail.com\*\*](mailto:traversehistory@gmail.com)

As always, thanks to all of the Committee members: Miles Lindberg, Peter Doren, Jim Warner, Bonnie Smith, Marty MacLeod, Peg Siciliano and Fred Nelson

---

## FROM TREASURER OFFENHAUSER'S DESK

---

For the first months of 2026 the society has met most of our larger obligations for the year. This included our board insurance and an annual donation to the district library for their history intern program. Also, several annual (and biennial) expenses, such as telephone, P.O. box etc. have been paid in full. That said, we did tap some of our unrestricted funds.

Overall, our cash flow has been adequate. This is due to the offsetting membership dues and donations. And, as previously reported, our savings is more than adequate to meet any circumstances that arise that are adverse to our budgetary goals. Hence, the financial condition of the society is sound.

---

## NEWS ABOUT THE SOCIETY'S SOCIAL MEDIA

By Jordan Owen

---

Currently, TAHS maintains three social media accounts to help share both news about our organization and the unique stories of our region. We hope that you'll "like and subscribe" as well as engaging in the conversation!

**TAHS Facebook Page** — Where TAHS shares news with the community about activities, programs, and tour schedule. Follow the page to keep up to date on upcoming TAHS events and related news. Please follow at [facebook.com/traversehistory](https://facebook.com/traversehistory)

**TAHS Facebook Group:** Where TAHS members and friends can share and discuss historic images, content, and artifacts. Multiple posts a week spur an ongoing conversation that helps grow our understanding of the community. To join, search for the group on Facebook or follow the link from [facebook.com/traversehistory](https://facebook.com/traversehistory)

**TAHS Instagram Account:** — Another way for us to share unique historic images and content from around the Grand Traverse area! Please follow at [Instagram.com/traversehistory](https://Instagram.com/traversehistory)

---

## NEWS FROM THE TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

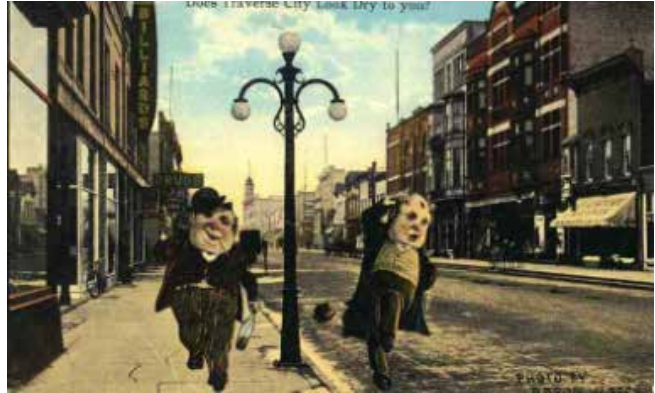
Amy Monette, Local History Collection & Kingsley Branch Manager

---

Hello from the Local History Collection!

Stop by the library in June to wet your curiosity instead of your whistle! Our latest exhibit on the second floor of the Woodmere Main Library, *Dry Laws, Wet Towns*, explores the era of Prohibition in Grand Traverse County through photographs and records preserved in the Local History Collection. Between 1920 and 1933, the federal ban on alcohol transformed

daily life across the region, giving rise to hidden saloons, raids, and a thriving underground trade sustained by local families. The exhibit highlights the ingenuity, risk, and resilience that characterized life during Prohibition while illuminating a lesser-known chapter of regional history. (Image, above: Orson W. Peck, colored photographic postcard, edited, #4803).



This exhibit pairs nicely with an upcoming program, *High Times in Dry Times: Prohibition in Michigan*, featuring Lois Sprengnether Keel (LoiS), a renowned Michigan storyteller. LoiS will guide attendees through an entertaining look at the stories, scandals, and spirit of the Roaring Twenties in Michigan. The program will take place in the McGuire Room of the Woodmere Main Library on Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.



The discussion surrounding the Carnegie Library has been in the news. Earlier this year, the City of Traverse City requested proposals for future use of the Carnegie Library building. TADL submitted a proposal outlining a partnership with the City to restore the Carnegie Building as a vibrant, publicly accessible community center featuring expanded public hours, stewardship of the Con Foster Museum Collection, research and meeting space, and community-driven programming rooted in local history and civic engagement. TADL remains under consideration as discussions about the building's future continue. Community members are encouraged to continue sharing their support for local history and public access with City leadership throughout the decision-making process. (Image, above: Creator unknown, colored photographic postcard, #2543).

## News from Northwestern Michigan College

---

The year 2026 is a celebratory year for many Traverse City institutions. It is the centennial year for the Oleson Stores and for the National Cherry Festival. It also is the 75th Anniversary of our community's college, Northwestern Michigan College (NMC).

NMC is going to celebrate its history with an Explore History Day set of events on Saturday, July 25th, starting at the Milliken Auditorium at 10:00. It will include the premier of the college's new history video, a panel discussion of four figures of the college's history, and the unveiling of the time capsule from the 50th anniversary event. This will be followed by a history walk of seven buildings on the Front Street campus and close

with a NMC Concert Band and NMC Jazz Band concert back at the Milliken at 7PM. All these events are family friendly. For more information, go to the event's website at <https://www.nmc.edu/75/history-day.html>

**<https://www.nmc.edu/75/history-day.html>**

## 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](mailto: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 - P.O. Box 42 Traverse City, MI 49685-0042