

HISTORY MATTERS

The Newsletter of HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE at the Saranac Laboratory Museum



RESILIENCE AND PURPOSE

In unprecedented times, Historic Saranac Lake is not only surviving, but thriving! Over these past months, we have demonstrated the fundamental role our museum programs play in building community. We have also made major progress on our Capital Campaign to expand the museum into the Trudeau Building, with Garry B. Trudeau serving as honorary Campaign Chair.

We are honored to announce that the lead gift has been secured to dedicate the Trudeau building in memory of Mary Rousmaniere Gordon. With this generous donation, we have secured over \$1.85 million towards our goal of \$3.6 Million to purchase and restore the building and install museum exhibits in both buildings. Together, we will create an exemplary museum that presents the history of the Saranac Lake region. This summer, over \$480,000 has been secured in lead gifts for the campaign.

Recent grants include: a \$50,000 grant over two years from the Institute for Museum and Library services to support the care of our museum collection; a grant from the Northern New York Library Network to support the digitization of a special collection; a CARES grant from Humanities NY to support our museum programs; and special grants from Stewart's Foundation and the Price Chopper Golub Foundation.

Our architectural team is preparing the construction documents now. We will go out to bid this year, with exterior construction slated to begin this spring!



*The museum re-opened safely in mid July!
See more on page 4.*



The Trudeau building will be dedicated in memory of Mary Rousmaniere Gordon.

SAVE THE DATE!

Annual Meeting
Thursday, Oct. 29

BOARD MEMBERS

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Amy Catania
- Museum Administrator:
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- Cure Porch on Wheels:
Kayt Gochenaur
- Membership & Grants Manager:
Adam Guillette



Made possible, in part, by the NY State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the NY State Legislature.

JOIN THE LEGACY SOCIETY

by making a donation to our endowment fund at the Adirondack Foundation or by naming HSL as a beneficiary in your will. Thank you!

LABORATORY REPAIRS

Many thanks to all the wonderful friends who helped us meet our fundraising goal to make emergency repairs to the Saranac Laboratory Museum! In less than a week, we raised over \$20,000 for needed emergency roof repairs here at the Saranac Laboratory Museum. Repairs to the slate roof and John Black Room roof area begin this month!

OUR MISSION

Historic Saranac Lake preserves and presents local history and architecture to build a stronger community.

From our Board President

A Stronger Community

Dear Friends,

Historic Saranac Lake's mission is to preserve and present area history and architecture to build a stronger community. That last clause was a new addition to our mission statement, developed out of a strategic planning process that we undertook last year. As the Board of Directors evaluated how Historic Saranac Lake has grown since our founding 40 years ago, and where we want to be going in the future, we agreed on the importance of that central purpose: **to build a stronger community**.

This spring, as the pandemic set in, we all suddenly realized the important role institutions like Historic Saranac Lake have in preserving and strengthening the ties that hold us together. Looking back over these last seven months, I am immensely proud of how hard our staff has worked to adjust to a new way of working and to nurture that sense of community. Here are some of the things I'm most proud of:

- HSL has worked to document these unprecedented times. Museum Administrator Chessie Monks-Kelly has carefully selected photos and artifacts representative of this time to save in the collection. Oral History Coordinator Kayt Gochenaur has interviewed many local residents about their experiences, and she has recorded many oral histories with our elders by phone.
- We have worked hard over the last seven months to ensure the financial well being of our organization. This is particularly important as we are in the midst of a multi-million dollar capital campaign. I am happy to report that thanks to the generosity of so many friends — new and old — who recognize the importance of our mission, we are in a strong financial position.
- In response to nationwide protests over the death of George Floyd, HSL staff took time to educate themselves on Black history in the Adirondacks and the United States. We were intentional in our communications to amplify the voices of people speaking out about racism, past and present, and to highlight stories of Black heritage in our region.
- Recognizing the isolation and upheaval that many people have been experiencing, Executive Director Amy Catania has written thoughtful weekly "letters from the porch" relating our current experience to history. Through these letters, many of us have found a sense of purpose and community.

On behalf of the board of directors, thank you for helping us to make history matter!

Sincerely, 

Amy Jones, Board President



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Margaret Worden for leading Sanatorium tours; Amy and Peter Jones for landscaping; Karen Morris for office help; Carolyn Greenberg for caring for the Bartok Cabin; Sara Sheldon for helping with the collections project; Bunk Griffin for sharing his wonderful local history articles; Marc Wanner and Mary Hotaling for building the wiki website of local history.

NYCON TRAINING

The New York State Council on the Arts nominated HSL to receive a scholarship to attend this year's virtual "Camp Finance." The statewide conference, facilitated by the New York Council of Nonprofits, provided training on thought leadership, financial management best practices, governance insights, fundraising, and communication expertise. Board President Amy Jones, Treasurer Andrew Rawdon, Executive Director Amy Catania, and Membership and Grants Manager Adam Guillette attended the virtual workshops over the three days. Our thanks to our partners in the arts at NYSCA for making this opportunity available!

SPRING & SUMMER RE-CAP



Actors reading the play "Safe Harbor" by Karen Lewis

PLAY READING

In September, we hosted a socially distant reading of the play, "Safe Harbor," by Karen Lewis. The play, set in a cure cottage in Saranac Lake during the TB years, was read from the Merkel Cottage on Park Avenue.

GALA PREVIEW



We enjoyed presenting a virtual gathering celebrating the history of the 1940s in Saranac Lake, particularly the history of Latin American patients. Our thanks to Vanessa Pillen of the Dance Sanctuary, who presented a Mambo lesson. We look forward to hosting the gala when conditions allow at the beautiful Hotel Saranac.

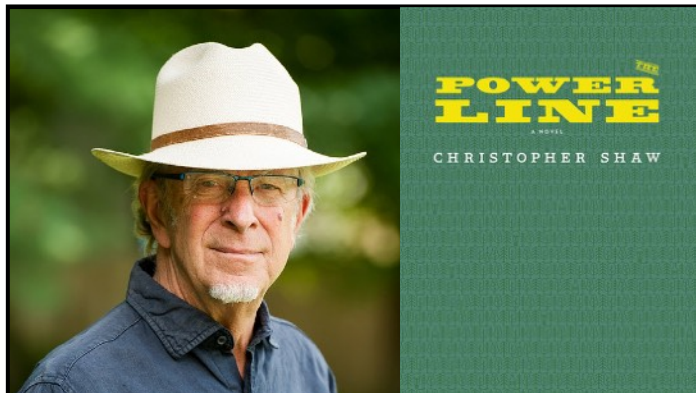
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION TOUR



This summer we co-hosted an online tour and presentation about the history of the beautiful Church of the Ascension in Saranac Inn.

Our thanks to Rev. Tyler Montgomery for leading the presentation. Rev. Montgomery grew up attending the Church of the Ascension with his family each summer and began his ministry there this July. Designed by NY City Architect, Mr. Jardine, the beautifully preserved log church was built in 1884.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Chris Shaw will be the guest presenter at our fall annual meeting

ANNUAL MEETING

On Thursday, October 29, at 5:00pm, Historic Saranac Lake members and those wishing to become members are invited to join us by Zoom for our Annual Meeting. Christopher Shaw will lead a discussion about his new book, *The Power Line*. The book follows the adventures of Fran Germaine, rustic builder and old-time fiddle player, and his friend Lonnie Monroe, the source for the tapes and transcriptions made in the eighties about their days working together as bootleggers for Legs Diamond.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

- Stay tuned for news of these upcoming events —
- Tours of the Trudeau Sanatorium
 - An online Bartók Concert and virtual tour of the Bartók Cabin
 - An in-person auction of paintings by Ursula Trudeau when conditions allow.

IN THE NEWS

- Infectious disease is a hot topic, and we've been in the news!
- The feature story in NY Archives Magazine's fall edition is an article by Amy Catania about essential workers in Saranac Lake history.
 - Jack Laduke produced several stories for Mountain Lakes PBS featuring Saranac Lake history and Historic Saranac Lake's programs during the pandemic.
 - Cottage Life Magazine published an article about Saranac Lake's curing history by Leslie Garrett.
 - NBC Channel 5 interviewed Oral History Coordinator Kayt Gochenauer about her project to document Saranac Lake in the time of COVID.
 - Executive Director Amy Catania spoke on "The Historians" podcast with Bob Cudmore.
 - Journalist Elizabeth Yuko interviewed HSL staff for articles featuring Saranac Lake and local history in Readers Digest, Roadtrippers Magazine, CNN, Bloomberg CityLab, and Architectural Digest.

MUSEUM AND COLLECTIONS



The historic card catalog containing records of the T.B. Society.

T.B. SOCIETY CARDS DONATED

We were honored to receive a donation of almost 19,000 records from the Voluntary Health Association (formerly the Saranac Lake Society for the Control of Tuberculosis). These cards were kept by the T.B. Society from approximately 1910 to 1953. They include patient applications to Trudeau Sanatorium, registers of cure cottages, lists of nurses, equipment loaned to patients, and more. With the help of a special collections grant from the Northern New York Library Network, we will begin transcribing the cards to make them searchable by HSL staff and increase the speed and ease of response to requests for information on patients. Stay tuned for more on this exciting donation!

REOPENING SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

The Saranac Laboratory Museum reopened in mid-July in accordance with phase guidelines from New York State as well as best practices within the museum field, the Museum is now open with limited hours, Thursday-Saturday from 10:00am—5:00pm. The number of visitors allowed in the museum at a time is reduced, and masks and social distancing are required. To help us reduce crowding, visitors are also encouraged to book online an advance time slot for their visit. These policies and other measures have helped us keep our staff and visitors safe during a record-number summer visitation season. Thanks to everyone who has visited the museum and made the summer a success! Check out our website for the most up-to-date guidelines and information on visiting the Museum.



Women's Suffrage panel on display in the John Black Room.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE DISPLAYS

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, we hosted two temporary displays on Women's Suffrage. The first display featured a panel covered in petitions from 1917, signed by women (and a few men!) in Franklin County in support of women's right to vote. This panel was loaned to us by the Lake Placid North Elba Historical Society and was originally discovered in a home in Saranac Lake undergoing renovation. The second display, titled "Rightfully Hers," explored the history of women's suffrage in America up through today. This professionally-designed pop-up exhibit (pictured above) was generously provided to HSL by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). To explore online versions of the "Rightfully Hers" exhibit at NARA, visit their website at <https://museum.archives.gov/rightfully-hers>.

MORE COLLECTIONS NEWS

Recent exciting additions to the collection include:

- An album of photographs taken by Lillian Wilczak while taking the cure at Stony Wold, 1928-1930. Courtesy of Karen Jacobs.
- A photo album and trophy belonging to Eddy Whitby, who stayed at the Conklin Cottage on Main Street. Courtesy of Randall and Stephen Baldwin.
- 1933 "Our Book" of art, poetry, and writings compiled by the students of Saranac Lake Junior High School. Courtesy of Susan Moody.

Have an item you want to donate to the collection? Contact our Museum Administrator: chessie@historicsaranaclake.org.

BEST OF LUCK, NATHAN!

We are sad to say goodbye to our wonderful Museum Assistant, Nathan Work, as he heads off to start his college career. Thank you for all of your hard work on the collections in the past year! We will miss you!

CURE PORCH ON WHEELS and ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



LIVE FROM THE PORCH

The Cure Porch on Wheels hosted a ten-week virtual concert series this summer. Local musicians performed socially distant solo concerts that we recorded and shared to social media. Many of the musicians (like Curt Stager, pictured above) performed original songs. Hearing our talented local musicians brought so much joy during the time of quarantine. Pictured above, in the CPOW windows, are some signs from our Thanks to Essential Workers project. We invited community members to send in notes of thanks and encouragement. By the end of the concert series, the Porch windows were papered with thank you notes! View the Live from the Porch concerts on our YouTube channel.

JOIN THE CPOW CLUB!

Support the Cure Porch on Wheels by joining the CPOW club online! You will receive great CPOW merchandise such as a porch t-shirt, lapel pin, sticker, or print of original artwork by Julie Riker.

NEW DISCOVER HISTORY BROCHURE
We are pleased to announce the publication of a new resource! This new "Discover History" brochure invites visitors to see our museum, stop in at the historic Hotel Saranac, and walk down Main Street to explore the historic downtown.
This brochure project was a collaboration between HSL and the Hotel Saranac, supported by a matching grant from the Destination Development and Marketing Fund of the Franklin County Local Development Corporation.



DURING THIS TIME

Since March, the Oral History Project has been working to document the effect of COVID-19 on Saranac Lake. We conducted over 40 oral history interviews as part of this project! Some interviews lasted only five minutes, and had just two questions: How has COVID-19 affected your life, and have you learned something in this experience? Other interviews lasted over an hour and touched on different aspects of life, work, and recreation affected by the pandemic. Explore the responses in an interactive display at www.hslstories.org. This project is ongoing. Contact kayt@historicsaranaclake.org to share your answer to the two questions above!

ORAL HISTORY BY REE RICKARD

We are pleased to accept into our collection a series of oral histories of former TB patients. The interviews were conducted by Ree Rickard. Ree's sister Caroline donated them to HSL at the suggestion of Kathleen Mullen Schneck. The oral history includes an interview with Kathleen's mother Eleanor LaVallee Mullen. The interviews will be available on our wiki site.



Ree Rickard
7/28/1944 — 5/25/2018

TALKING POINTS

This summer we shared a ten-week video series on how to do oral history interviews! We covered tips for good recordings, what questions to ask, how to structure an interview, tips for interviewing people with memory loss, and much more! Check out HSL's YouTube channel to see the series.

SCHOOL OUTREACH



Fall is usually a busy time with school group tours, but this year we have moved our programs online! Executive Director Amy Catania provided Zoom presentations for college students in Dr. Laura Ettinger’s course on the History of Public Health in America at Clarkson University (pictured above), as well as presentations for North Country Community College, the Albany School of Public Health, and local high school students in the BOCES New Visions program.

PRESERVATION

ST. GABRIEL’S CHURCH SAVED!



The Cloudsplitter Foundation has been working with Paul Smith’s College (PSC) and the diocese of Ogdensburg to secure the abandoned St. Gabriel’s church. HSL has been a

partner in this effort. The NY Supreme Court recently determined that under the 1896 deed, the property had reverted to PSC ownership. Cloudsplitter Foundation will be working with PSC to devise a plan to convert the building for student use.

TAX CREDIT WORKSHOP

This spring we hosted an online workshop with the State Office of Historic Preservation on the NY State Rehabilitation Tax Credit. The credit is available to support the cost of rehabilitating properties listed on the National Register. Over 230 local properties are listed, and we await news on our proposal to expand the Berkeley Square downtown National Register district.

RESOURCES

We recently published this new handout for museum visitors that compares TB to COVID-19. We offer an array of online resources for students of all ages. Visit www.historyclaraclake.org to explore!

TUBERCULOSIS / COVID-19

WHAT CAUSES IT?

TB is caused by bacteria spread through the air when a sick person coughs. It is an ancient organism that has been found in prehistoric human remains.

COVID is caused by a virus, shared from person to person, mostly through the air. The coronavirus seems to have moved from animals to humans in 2019.

HOW DOES IT HURT THE BODY?

TB most often infects the lungs, but it can cause damage throughout the body.

The **COVID** virus can provoke a massive immune response that is still being understood.

WHAT IS THE DEATH RATE?

In the 1900s, **TB** killed 1 in 7 people in the U.S. TB currently infects 1 out of 4 people worldwide. It kills 1.5 million people each year.

As of October 2020, **COVID** has infected 34 million people worldwide and killed over 1 million. **COVID** has killed over 200,000 people in the U.S.

IS THERE A VACCINE?

The BCG vaccine for **TB** is partially effective in children. It not widely used in the U.S. New vaccines are still in development.

COVID vaccines are in development around the world.

HOW IS IT TREATED?

TB is diagnosed with a skin test and X-ray. It is usually treated with at least 6 months of antibiotics. Some TB strains are drug resistant. Quarantine is used for infectious patients.

COVID is diagnosed with a nasal swab. Antivirals can help reduce infection while other treatments can slow the immune response and relieve symptoms. Quarantine is an important tool.

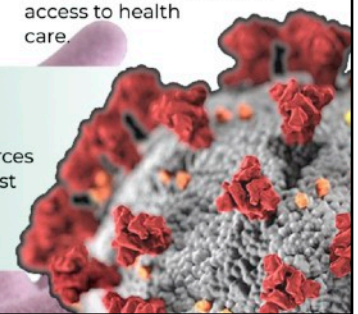
WHO IS MOST AFFECTED?

TB is prevalent in developing countries with limited access to health care and high rates of HIV. Young adults are susceptible to the disease.

COVID disproportionately affects the elderly, people with pre-existing conditions, and communities with limited access to health care.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

The **COVID-19** pandemic is consuming global health resources and threatening progress against **TB**. Drug resistant **TB** is a major threat.



THE NEW HISTORY MUSEUM OF THE SARANAC LAKE REGION

Planning continues for the expansion of the Saranac Laboratory Museum into the rehabilitated Trudeau Building at 118 Main Street. Pictured are renderings developed by our exhibit planner, Bob Davidson of Exhibits and More of two of the new museum spaces.

The museum plan is informed by an in-depth interpretive planning process led in 2019 by independent consultant, Kate Cravens. The new exhibits will be:

- Interactive — Hands-on, multi-media exhibits in both buildings will capture the attention of children and visitors of all ages.
- Changing — Rotating exhibits created in collaboration with partnering institutions will explore a variety of topics of interest to visitors and local residents.
- Integrated — The two museum buildings will be unified through careful site planning to create one attractive, accessible museum campus.
- Relevant — Re-designed interpretation at the Saranac Laboratory Museum will focus on the history of scientific research and modern day issues in science and public health.

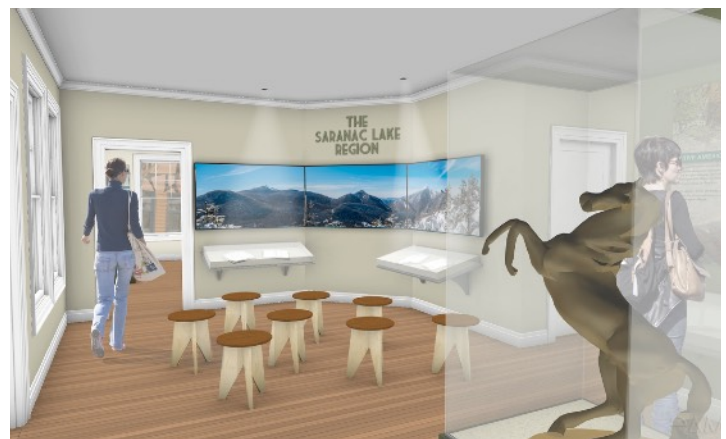
First floor exhibits at the Trudeau building will present the history of the Saranac Lake region, including stories from the many hamlets and lake communities that make up our school district area, such as Rainbow Lake, Vermontville, Paul Smith's, Upper Saranac Lake. The second floor

will present history of the fresh air cure, cure cottages and sanatoria, occupational therapy, and more.

The new museum buildings will feature:

- Improved museum collections storage space.
- The David V. Pecora Research Room, facilitating public access to our collection.
- Interactive children's exhibits and science activities in the laboratory space
- Special temporary exhibits presented in collaboration with other area museums and private collections.
- Expanded interpretation at the Saranac Laboratory Museum exploring science history and important present day issues in public health and tuberculosis control and treatment.

Contact us to get involved in the creation of our community museum!



Native American History Exhibit

In July, we met with Historian and Artist, John Fadden of the Six Nations Indian Museum and SUNY Potsdam Archeologist, Tim Messner to brainstorm ideas for an exhibit in the new museum about the history of Native American people in the region. This summer, HSL staff visited the Akwesasne Cultural Center, where we met with Iakonikonriosta, Museum Program Coordinator. We also visited with Jen Krester at the Wild Center to learn about their recent projects featuring Native American arts and culture. A Vision Grant from Humanities New York is supporting this planning project.



Kayt Gochenaur, John Fadden, Tim Messner, and Amy Catania

HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE

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Make your check payable to Historic Saranac Lake
or donate by credit card:

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Name as appears on card:

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You may also give online at
<http://www.historicsaranaclake.org/support-us>

At the end of each year, we appeal to our members and friends for a special contribution to help us start strong in the coming year.

Yes, I want to join the team with my annual fund gift of \$ _____



Saranac Lake Boys' Club Pontiac hockey team, c. 1924. Courtesy of Natalie Leduc

**Historic Saranac Lake is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization.
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