

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HISTORIC SARANAC LAKE WINS HUMANITIES GRANTS

Saranac Lake, NY — Historic Saranac Lake announced that they have been awarded National American Rescue Plan Funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and from Humanities NY (HNY).

“The humanities grants will underwrite expanded programs and support our general operations as we bounce back from the economic damage caused by the pandemic,” said Board President, Amy Jones. “These grants will make it possible to continue to provide programs for local students, conduct oral histories, lead talks and tours, and plan events on the Cure Porch on Wheels, our mobile exhibit space.”

A portion of the National Endowment for the Humanities grant of \$50,000 will support the development of a new short film presenting the history of the Saranac Lake region for museum visitors. Executive Director Amy Catania said, “We are thrilled to launch this exciting project. The new film is an important first step in the project to expand our museum to tell a broader history of the Saranac Lake region.”

The Humanities NY grant of \$20,000 will support general operations as well as online and in-person talks and public events exploring issues relating to HSL’s new exhibit, “Pandemic Perspectives.” The exhibit explores connections between Saranac Lake’s history as a community that responded to tuberculosis and the current-day Covid-19 pandemic.

Historic Saranac Lake (HSL) opened the Saranac Laboratory Museum in 2009. Built in 1894 by Dr. Edward Livingston Trudeau, the laboratory museum presents the history of tuberculosis research and patient care in the village of Saranac Lake. In 2019, HSL purchased Dr. Trudeau’s neighboring home and medical office for expansion of the museum. It is a \$4.1 million project, which includes the cost of acquisition, substantial rehabilitation of the building, and museum exhibits. Over \$2.2 million has been raised to-date.

“The new film, supported by NEH, will be an important part of the new museum,” said Catania. The new film will include an introduction to the history of Indigenous peoples who lived in the region for thousands of years before white settlers arrived. “In the past, we have failed to present this history in any meaningful way, and it’s time to correct that,” said Catania. The NEH

grant will support consultation with John Fadden and the Six Nations Iroquois Cultural Center on this segment of the film. The film will be directed by local filmmaker Kirk Sullivan. The new film builds on a planning project supported by Humanities New York (HNY) in 2020.

“We have always worked to preserve and present the wider history of the Saranac Lake region, represented by the Saranac Lake school district area,” said Catania. “The Trudeau Building provides the space to tell a broader story beyond the story of tuberculosis, and to discuss the important history of TB more in-depth and in context. The humanities grants will help us build partnerships with scholars and other experts to ensure we tell the story of the region thoughtfully, creatively, and accurately.”

About Historic Saranac Lake: HSL’s mission is to preserve and present area history to build a stronger community. The Saranac Laboratory Museum is open Tuesday - Saturday, from 10am to 5pm, year-round.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities: Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at neh.gov.

About Humanities New York: Using dialogue, reflection, and critical thinking, Humanities New York applies the humanities to strengthen democratic society. Established in 1975 as the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Humanities New York is a private 501(c)(3) organization that may receive federal, state, and private funding. HNY SHARP (Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan) is made possible with funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities via the federal American Rescue Plan Act.

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The Saranac Laboratory Museum, 89 Church Street



Architectural Rendering of the Trudeau Building, 118 Main Street