

# The Nugget

Volume 14, Number 2

Spring 2025

*Lambertville Historical Society's  
Quarterly Newsletter*

*James Wilson Marshall House Museum*

[www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org)

## President's Message - Michael Menche

### Looking Back and Forward at Holcombe House

The Richard Holcombe House and its grounds remain a source of historical knowledge and an inspiration for the community to understand our heritage, as demonstrated by two LHS activities.

In November 2024 an LHS team—Jeff and Nancy Campbell, Tom Ogren and I—visited City Hall to inspect artifacts from the archaeological survey of the Holcombe House lot conducted by Hunter Research for the City of Lambertville. Mayor Nowick sent us the inventory of the 981 found artifacts and coordinated their delivery, reviewing them himself. As the property owner, the City was required to secure the survey because of planned restorative groundskeeping including drainage and planting.

The archaeologists conducted 65 narrow “shovel tests” at regular intervals throughout the property. They published a comprehensive report, which can be [read here](#). The LHS team was eager to view the artifacts, especially the one described as “precontact: stone, argillite, flake whole, pale green-gray, D 30 mm.”

“Precontact” means the item predates European colonial settlement. Argillite has significance in our area, as noted by the historical marker in East Amwell on Route 31 for [Upper Argillite Alley](#), which reads, “Lenape Tribes used the abundant Hunterdon mineral for arrowheads and tools.” In 1913 [archaeologists and historians reported](#) that “...the town of Lambertville was at one time occupied by a large aboriginal settlement, and even now artifacts are not infrequently dug up within the town.”



Despite its ancient significance, the argillite flake, barely more than one inch wide, was underwhelming at first glance. Nonetheless, the area at the east end of the Holcombe property where it was found will be protected from disturbances. Be on the lookout for argillite as you administer to your property this spring...

Other artifacts were mostly shards of pottery, glassware and brick - domestic detritus from nearly three centuries - bone fragments, including an apparent bovine jawbone with teeth. If you are interested, we will try to access and relay more archaeological findings from our area.

### Looking forward to 2026

LHS was planning activities for 2026 and our nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary when Jen Sirak, the executive director of the Lambertville Free Public Library, invited us to collaborate toward NJ State Library grant-funded programming related to “REV 250, Examining the Semiquincentennial through a Jersey Lens.” We immediately viewed this as an outstanding opportunity to enhance our community outreach about our area's significance during Colonial times and the Revolution.

We are helping the Library plan and curate a one-day event at Holcombe House proposed for April 2026, which will feature an encampment and demonstrations by Continental Army reenactors, organized by Mark Sirak of Washington Crossing State Park. We believe that an incarnation of General Washington will revisit his two-time temporary headquarters to inspect the troops and discuss his views and experiences with attendees.

For this event, LHS trustee Tom Ogren has secured the participation of three experts who will conduct tours of the house and barn, and a presentation about local military movements. Tom also intends to create a historical booklet about Holcombe House like his “Story of Goat Hill” for the Sourland Conservancy—LHS will support his magnanimous efforts.

Additionally, LHS is partnering with the Library for a series of presentations: LHS members John and Barbara Hencheck will discuss “the most important battle of the Revolution” and offer expert insights not to be missed; Library patrons will discuss the Library's historical resources about the Colonial Era; and Lambertville art conservator Christyl Cusworth and WCPA executive director Annette Earling will discuss [the restoration of the 1921 George Matthews Harding mural](#) commemorating the crossing of the Delaware, which will be showcased in the Washington Crossing State Park Museum and Visitors Center under construction and set to open in 2026. Hopefully, the Library will be awarded the grant for such exciting and meaningful programming!

## LHS Wins 2025 CHPP Re-grant Award

by Jeffrey Campbell

We are excited to report that on February 4, 2025, the Hunterdon County Board of County Commissioners approved a \$14,000 County History Partnership Program (CHPP) re-grant to Lambertville Historical Society! CHPP grant funds are awarded to eligible Hunterdon County-based organizations for programs and services offered in Hunterdon County through a formal competitive grant application/independent peer review panel process. LHS is one of four 2025 CHPP re-grantees and received the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest grant awarded; only the Hunterdon County Historical Society received more. The maximum possible grant was \$15,000.

In recommending the re-grant, the independent review panel found that “Lambertville Historical Society creates engaging programs and events that serve a broad and diverse audience.” The panel noted LHS’s efforts to gain individual listing for the Holcombe House and barns on the National and State Registers of Historic Places as providing a “tangible connection to the region’s Revolutionary War-era heritage.” The panel further observed that LHS’s “Latino oral history project will capture the experiences of the city’s recent immigrant population for future researchers and help cement connections to more recent residents.” Finally, the panel “appreciated” LHS’s partnerships with numerous local arts and cultural organizations.

The LHS board of trustees greatly values our ongoing relationship with the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission and deeply appreciates the tremendous support we have received. We look forward to utilizing these funds in pursuit of our vision of Enriching the Present by Engaging Our Past.

First Sunday Walking Tours return on May 4 and continue into November.

They start in front of the Marshall House, 60 Bridge Street, at 2 PM.

Free but donations are welcomed.

**Join, renew membership, or donate to the LHS at**

**[www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org)**

### Lambertville From Above – early 1930s



Note that what is now Route 179 (formerly US-202) and 165 was recently cut through but does not appear to be complete. The churches stand out, some factories are gone and there was still some railroad activity in the lower left. Otherwise much of the city appears the same today.

## Plein Air Plus Art Auction – February 1

- William Falk

About 300 people attended the annual Lambertville Historical Society Plein Air Plus Auction and fundraiser on February 1, generating more than \$34,000 in sales on 65 paintings by local artists.

The festive event, held at Rago Arts and Auction Center, celebrated the work of dozens of artists and featured food, wine, live music, laughter, and conversation. Bidders roamed the exhibition of paintings, writing down offers on works that spoke to them and asked for a place in their homes. As the cutoff for final bids approached, the buzz in the auction space grew, and art lovers raced back and forth to write down their latest offers. The bids were tallied and announced, and dozens of happy buyers went home with their new artwork tucked under their arms.

The sales were evenly split between LHS and the artists. All told, the auction generated about \$17,000 for the artists and nearly \$15,000 in net income for the LHS.

The auction was organized and executed with great dedication and hard work by a large contingent of LHS members, led by the indefatigable Plein Air co-chairs Liz Riegel and Laurie Weinstein and by Volunteer Coordinator Martha Dennis.

It was the first time my wife, Karla, and I attended Plein Air since moving to Lambertville in 2023, and we were impressed at the teamwork and synchronization of all the moving parts that made the event a success. It was a delight to participate, and to see the community out in force to enjoy the work of the many fine artists in this area. The day was filled with the special attributes that brings people to Lambertville: history, art, music, food and drink, friendship, laughter, and community.



Luscious edibles helped fuel the art hunt.



What about that one?



A day of laughter, fun, and enthusiasm.



A warm gathering of friends, old and new.



LHS president Michael Menche announces the winning bidders.  
[All photos on this page by Jay Garrison]

## Annual Meeting – January 26

A full house (about 90 attendees) took in a full agenda at the 2025 annual meeting. After approval of the previous year's minutes and financials, the Narducci Preservation Award was presented (see below); election of new officers and trustees, including newcomers John Franzini and Kari Willey; Mary Barry Freedman described the online LHS archive for which she was mainly responsible; and finally the prestation of Railroad History of Lambertville by LHS member Shane Scanlon Blische.



LHS members, Lambertville residents and railfans made for a full house.



Incoming president Mike Menche presents the outgoing Jeff Campbell with a token of appreciation.

### **Welcome New Members**

**Michelle Harris**

**Victoria Walker & family (welcome back)**

**Shelley Wiseman**

## The LHS Collections

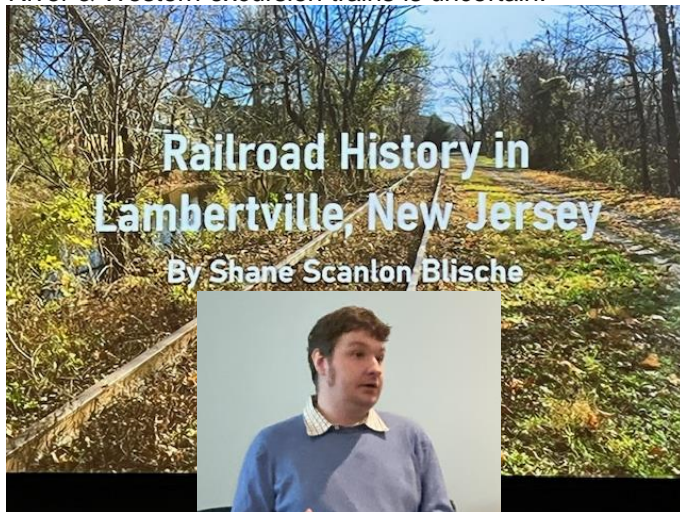


Mary Barry Freedman, Museum Collections Committee chairperson, described accessing LHS collections online. For years, she painstakingly entered accessions both new and old into the archive database including complete and accurate descriptions. Many of the accessions have accompanying images.

Please take a look and search the collections at <https://lhsnj.catalogaccess.com/>.

## The Program: Railroad History in Lambertville

LHS member Shane Scanlon Blische (below) took the group on an informed journey, illustrated with photos and maps, that began in the 1830s. Service began in 1851 with the Belvidere Delaware Railroad becoming a major employer in town. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the return of Black River & Western excursion trains is uncertain.



## Narducci Preservation Award

The Historical Society established the Alice Narducci Preservation awards in 1996 in honor of a founding society member who played a key role in saving the Marshall House from demolition. The award, a bronze plaque, recognizes historical preservation of a structure's exterior, restoration of a building to its original architectural integrity, or a combination. More than 50 properties have been recognized so far.

The Narducci Award Selection Committee (Peter Kraus, Irene Rudolph, Mark Weinstein and Fred Eisinger) recommended that the 2025 award be given to 46 York Street. Owner Michelle Harris embarked on major restoration of the mid-19th century building including removal/replacement of the stucco facade and new detailing with stained glass, brick, historically accurate repointing, and copper flashing. The restoration adds much to the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century ambience of York Street. From being a somewhat shabby mixed-use building it is now a very attractive residence on the streetscape. All previous awardees are listed at <https://lambertvillehistoricalsociety.org/narducci-award-presentation>



Michelle Harris accepting the Narducci Award from selection committee chair Fred Eisinger for her work on 46 York Street.



46 York Street before ...



and after.

## The 2025 LHS Board

In addition to approving the previous meeting's minutes and 2025 finances, election of new officers and trustees took place. Thanks were extended to outgoing vice-president Liz Riegel and trustee Peter Kraus. The group then elected new trustees John Franzini and Kari Willey.



Most of the 2025 LHS officers and trustees - from left Nancy Campbell, Bill Falk, Jeff Campbell, Mike Menche, Kari Willey, Chuck Hansen (partially obscured), Regina Hoag, Ed Hoag, Fred Eisinger and Tom Ogren. Missing from the portrait are Karla Feuer, John Franzini, Patrick Gallagher and Lee Lawrence.

### ***Thank You for the Donations***

We thank our generous Centurions and all of our members for their continued support. We recognize those below for making a donation beyond their membership dues during the last quarter (we apologize if we missed anyone). It is always sincerely appreciated.

**Denise Brown-Kahney & Michael Kahney**

**Deborah & Brian Kelly**

**Bambi & Paul Kuhl**

**Ann Lyons**

**Doug McLeod & Bette Anne Berg**

**Barbara Ross**

**Richard West & Dee Snell**

**Gary Woodward & Jan Robbins**

# LHS Calendar

Check this issue, the LHS website or our Facebook page (linked URLs for both below) for events and updates. **First Sunday of the month walking tours are coming up on on May 4, June 1 and July 6. They leave from the Marshall House, 60 Bridge St., at 2 PM.**

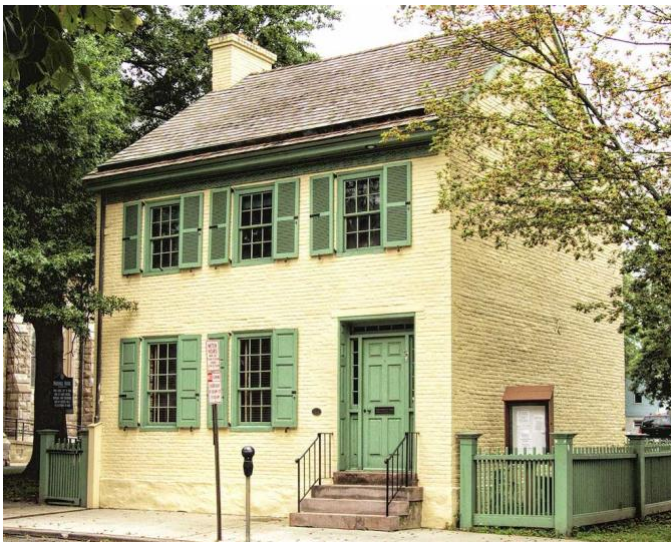


LHS sends *The Nugget* to members by email where they can read the full-color pdf version and have one less item to recycle unless they have been receiving a black and white print copy. **If you are interested in going back to paper, please call 609-397-0770 or write [info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org).**



Find us on  
**Facebook**

[www.facebook.com/LambertvilleHistory](http://www.facebook.com/LambertvilleHistory)



## Lambertville Historical Society

P.O. Box 2  
60 Bridge Street  
Lambertville, NJ 08530  
609-397-0770

[www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](http://www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org)

*Made possible with funds from the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission, a partner of the New Jersey Historical Commission.*



## Our Mission

The Lambertville Historical Society fosters, inspires and encourages the awareness, preservation and appreciation of Lambertville's history and architecture through education, member engagement, community involvement, and the curation, promotion and conservation of the James Wilson Marshall House and Museum.

The Marshall House is open from 1:00 to 4:00 PM on weekends between Shad Fest and the end of October. Free admission.

## Officers

<b>President</b>	Michael Menche
<b>Vice President</b>	Chuck Hansen
<b>Treasurer</b>	Patrick Gallagher
<b>Secretary</b>	Nancy Campbell

## Trustees

Jeffrey Campbell	Edward Hoag
Fred Eisinger	Regina Hoag
William Falk	Lee Lawrence
Karla Feuer	Tom Ogren
John Franzini	Kari Willey

*The Nugget* is the quarterly newsletter of the Lambertville Historical Society © 2025. All previous issues are available on the LHS website.

**Editor:** Fred Eisinger

**Contributors:** Jeffrey Campbell, William Falk