

# The Nugget

Volume 15, Number 2

Spring 2026

*Lambertville Historical Society's  
Quarterly Newsletter*

*James Wilson Marshall House Museum*

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

## **Celebrating Our Nation's 250th Anniversary in Lambertville**

<https://lambertvillehistoricalsociety.org/celebrating-nations-250th-anniversary>

The Lambertville Free Public Library, LHS and partners proudly present a series of events to promote awareness of our area's importance during the birth of the United States.

### **The American Revolution Comes to Lambertville, Saturday, April 18 The Richard Holcombe Homestead, 260 North Main St. (Rte. 29), Lambertville**



- Continental Army Encampment & Demonstrations
- George Washington & Daniel Bray
- Children's Activities Throughout the Day
- Roxey Ballet's New Jersey Ballad
- Tours of Holcombe House (Where Washington Stayed Twice) & Old Barns
- Expert Presentations on Local History During the Revolution
- Historical & Archaeological Exhibits
- Free, rain or shine
- The encampment is wheelchair accessible; Holcombe House is not

## **Coercive Acts and Unalienable Rights : Why Colonists Joined the Revolution**

Thursday, June 4, 7:00 pm

Lambertville Free Public Library, 6 Lilly Street, Lambertville, Free

Lambertville resident and LHS trustee Sue Craig, PhD will discuss what had prepared the colonial mindset to turn from seeking redress of their grievances to violent rebellion. Sue will touch on the philosophical foundations of independence, including the legacy of the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution, as well as the natural rights of the Enlightenment, and why these ideas had particular influence on colonial attitudes.

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

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

## Annual Meeting – January 25

A major winter storm did not prevent the annual meeting from going on – by Zoom. President Michael Menche arranged for motions and votes on the budget and the election of new officers and trustees. He also reviewed the many LHS accomplishments during 2025.

The main presentation of the program was by Mark Sirak, Resource Interpretive Specialist, New Jersey State Park Service, who spoke about the new Washington Crossing State Park Visitors Center Museum and other significant improvements to the park. If you didn't attend (or would like a refresher) you can catch it all at <https://youtu.be/yjRanhUk40s>. (Mark Sirak's presentation about Washington Crossing State Park begins at 33:00.)

## More Local History

The spring issue of River Towns magazine contains the article "Brotherhood of Thieves" about the 1737 land swindle in which William Penn's sons stole much of Bucks County from the indigenous Lenape. It was written by William Falk, Pulitzer-prize winning LHS trustee. You can read it at <https://epaper.buckscountyherald.com/p/river-towns-magazine/3-6-26/r/31/60-61/7797/2141539>

## Classroom Discussions About James Marshall

- *Michael Menche*

On March 10 I visited three 8th-grade History classes at South Hunterdon Regional Middle School, as Brendon Engle's students were studying westward expansion during the 1800's. We watched and discussed the LHS video about James Marshall and the Gold Rush, <https://youtu.be/j1b1mTfMrMc>.

I asked the students if they were in Marshall's position as an accidental gold discoverer, would they promptly tell their workers as he did? Some said they would tell no one; others said they would tell only trusted friends so they could get rich together. We considered Marshall's quandary as he held those first flakes: he knew it was gold, but he wanted to complete the mill that he partly owned with John Sutter and hoped would secure his future. We considered the decisions about keeping the discovery a secret. Marshall was forthcoming with his workers and John Sutter but not with the indigenous Nisenan people, and in subsequent months he was forthcoming with the American Military Governor of Alta California, Col. Richard Mason, but not with the prospectors who came to Coloma to get rich quick.

We discussed how gold rushes around the world have often brought opportunity for settlers but hardship for Indigenous communities. I asked what modern activities resemble the Gold Rush mentality, and students suggested gambling and playing the lottery. None expressed interest in choosing to live as a pioneer in harsh conditions, building a cabin, and surviving in a remote wilderness area.



We remarked how the United States and Lambertville industrialized during Marshall's life. He had traveled west by covered wagon and returned by the new transcontinental railroad. During his absence from Lambertville, a railyard and many factories had emerged.

An anecdote from Theresa Gay's biography of James Marshall elicited amusement and questions. While the eccentric, hard-drinking pioneer stayed with his prim and proper sisters and mother in Lambertville in late 1871 and early 1872, he ran outside one morning to greet an old acquaintance while wearing his long johns, which appalled his family and contributed to his departure. Students asked what long johns were, and they laughed that the family would have been so embarrassed by that act. We discussed how historical figures are often simplified into one description — such as calling James Marshall "bitter" — even though real lives are more complicated. We also explored how Marshall's appearance and lifestyle helped shape the iconic image of the 49er in American culture.

These classroom sessions featured questions about wealth, ethics, and historical change. It was rewarding to contemplate how one man from Lambertville could influence global events, while noting how history is often shaped by chance and human decisions.

### **Welcome New Members**

**Betty & John Flynn**

**Linda Gehron**

**Jackie & Daniel Gulino**

**Karin Johanson**

## Plein Air Plus – March 7



A great, wonderful success describes it. After more than ten years of generously providing space for Plein Air, Rago Arts and Auction Center informed LHS that due to business commitments they were no longer able to host the event. Undeterred, a new Plein Air committee planned a somewhat reimagined auction at the Inn at Lambertville Station Riverside Ballroom. Lisa Shippy-Woods, Patrick Gallagher, Denise

Adamucci, Tom Ogren, John Franzini, among numerous other volunteers, brought the event to fruition at its new location.



Bidding

Although higher costs necessitated the increased price of admission, Plein Air did not lose its sense of community. Artists, local residents, LHS members provided that familiar, friendly vibe along with refreshments and musical accompaniment.



Check-in



Conferring



Mingling

Despite the grey skies, the backdrop of the river and bridge enhanced the art, romance and good feelings. Major sponsors – Stark and Stark, Rago and Bank of Princeton - also enhanced the success and we thank them sincerely. The beautiful works of art remained the stars of the evening and almost every one was sold enhancing homes and gladdening the hearts of creators.

*All photos on this page courtesy of Robert Meola.*

## Exploring the American Revolution Locally with Students

- Michael Menche

We are grateful that South Hunterdon Regional School District administrators and teachers enthusiastically support LHS efforts to promote local history. In commemorating our nation's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I visited 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade classes at the elementary and middle schools on February 19 and March 17.

The presentations began at the national level: how the Declaration of Independence introduced ideas such as equality and individual rights. One student aptly said the Declaration was "a breakup letter" with England. We discussed how its contents were communicated by horseback and in town squares over weeks and months, and how reenactors to this day read it out loud on the Fourth of July in Philadelphia, Trenton, Washington Crossing and beyond because it means so much to our country.



Photo: Justin Holohan

The students learned that our area in 1776 was called Coryell's Ferry, a vital crossing point on the Delaware River. We considered the logistics and support required for Washington's army of 12,000 troops to cross over 2 ½ days here in 1778. Students were excited to recognize the Richard Holcombe House, a stone's throw from the elementary school and their favorite wintertime site for sledding, as the two-time headquarters for George

Washington and his officers, who strategized and wrote letters we can read in archives today. Alexander Hamilton's presence there resonated because of the musical "Hamilton" and a student asked if he was in fact the general's "right hand man" as is sung.

I pointed out that an 18-year-old soldier named James Monroe traveled in our area and was badly wounded at the Battle of Trenton. The musket ball remained in his shoulder for the rest of his life, including his two terms decades later as the fifth President of the United States. We discussed how the Coryells and Holcombes—names that are familiar today—assisted the Revolutionary cause.

There was danger during those times, evidenced by listings in "Battles and Skirmishes of the American Revolution in New Jersey." Several weeks before Washington crossed the Delaware, there was an exchange of fire between scouting parties in the Goat Hill area, and we tried to envision what that would have been like. Nearly two years later, the British captured Captain Samuel Dunhham and his two sons with 127 cattle at Coryell's Ferry. Why would the British want the cattle? I asked. "To ride them," a fourth grader said. It was generally accepted that the British were more likely seeking food, and we considered how residents would have felt about their livestock and agriculture being confiscated forcefully.

Lastly, the students were encouraged to be proud about our area's and New Jersey's importance during the formation of the United States. There are many local opportunities for them to learn about and experience history.

### **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.

**Sharon Bisaha**

**Franta Broulik**

**Nancy & Jeffrey Campbell**

**Susan Craig**

**Fred Eisinger & Peter Jewell**

**Dina & Marc Fanelli**

**Kathleen Flynn**

**Dan & Jackie Gulino**

**Loren & Flo Hurwitz**

**Janice Lambert Jarrett**

**Karen Kominsky**

**Kevin & Katie Michels**

**Jim Mastrich & Kathryn Hall**

**Terry & Paula Shea**

## George Coryell and George Washington Washington's Fishing Tackle

By Mary Barry Freedman, LHS Archivist

In this year of our country's 250<sup>th</sup> birthday, I thought it would be of interest to write about a native son, George Coryell (c. 1759 – February 18, 1850), who was one of the men who carried the Father of our Country to his tomb.

Ingham Coryell's 1943 book "Emanuel Coryell of Lambertville, New Jersey and his Descendants" states that George Coryell apprenticed to a carpenter in Monmouth County, NJ during the Revolutionary War and that his father Cornelius Coryell acted as a guide for George Washington during the war when the army was in Coryell's Ferry (now Lambertville NJ). He should not be confused with his uncle Captain George Coryell (1734-1813) who was a Captain in the NJ forces during the Revolution. The American Revolutionary War Veterans Plaque in the cemetery yard of the First Presbyterian Church indicates that the younger George was a Private.

In a 1906 "Forest and Stream" magazine article referenced below, John A. Anderson indicated that George Coryell was "a worker in iron and upon Washington's seeing in Philadelphia a gateway which he had made for Benjamin Franklin was invited by Washington to take up his residence and his calling at Alexandria". Ingham Coryell's book indicates that this took place during Washington's first term (1789-1792) and that Alexandria, VA was then a fast-growing community where it seems George's skills would be in demand.

Ingham Coryell's book describes George as a successful businessman in Alexandria. He was active in buying and sub-dividing land, and building houses. He married Nancy (Ann) Hamilton and built his own house on Duke St. in Alexandria.

George Coryell was a fellow Mason with George Washington at the Masonic Lodge in Alexandria as he told Sarah A. Gallagher (1821-1907) and she reported in her 1903 book "Early History of Lambertville, NJ".

After living in Alexandria for about 50 years, at 85 years of age, George returned to Lambertville in 1845 where he spent the remainder of his days.

Many Lambertville residents are aware of George Coryell as one of George Washington's pallbearers based on inscriptions on his monument in the cemetery yard of the First Presbyterian Church: "A brother member with Gn. Washington of Lodge No. 22" and "The last survivor of the six men who laid the Father of our Country in his Tomb."



George Coryell Monument in the cemetery yard of The First Presbyterian Church, Lambertville, NJ Photos: Mary Freedman

The digital library at Mount Vernon actually describes George's role as a "bier carrier" (sometimes referred to as an "active pallbearer"). They describe a bier carrier vs a pallbearer in regards to Washington's funeral as follows:

"A bier is a structure used to support a casket or a coffin. For Washington's funeral, one set of individuals carried the bier with the casket to the tomb. A second set of individuals designated as pallbearers carried the casket itself into the tomb."

George Coryell was one of four bier carriers. He took the place of William Moss when Moss became injured carrying the bier and Washington's casket. Six other individuals served as pallbearers carrying Washington's casket into the tomb.

The 1906 "Forest and Stream" article indicates that George Coryell did survive the six honorary pallbearers but outlived only one of the four bier carriers with which he is associated in carrying the body of George Washington to his tomb. I have not yet been able to determine the dates of death of all of the other bier carriers (Lawrence Hooff, Jr, James Turner, George Wise) so I cannot confirm that statement. Despite the slight inaccuracy in the inscription on his monument, George Coryell, native son of Lambertville (Coryell's Ferry), NJ, is remembered as one of the men who carried the Father of our Country to his tomb.

*Continued on the next page*

Now what about Washington's Fishing Tackle?

In 1906, well-known Lambertville NJ photographer John A. Anderson (June 6, 1829 – March 18, 1917) sent one of his photographs and a description along with some history of "George Washington's Fishing Tackle" to "Forest and Stream" magazine. The magazine published an article in their December 1, 1906 issue, containing Anderson's photograph and history.

In the archives of the Lambertville Historical Society is a copy of Anderson's photograph, and a copy of the "Forest and Stream" article. The article quotes Anderson as follows:

"This box, with the contents, was presented by General Washington to his physician, Dr. James Craik, by whom they were presented to George Coryell, of Alexandria, VA. The latter gave them to his nephew, Lewis S. Coryell [the son of George's sister Eleanor] of New Hope, Bucks County, Pa., in April, 1810, from whom, at his death, they came to his son Martin Coryell, by whom they were mounted in the manner shown in the photograph. Upon his death they came into the possession of his son Torbert."

According to Ingham Coryell's book, George Coryell was well acquainted with Dr. Craik as he built a house for him in about 1796 on Duke St. in Alexandria and later built his own house on the lot next to Dr. Craik's.

Exactly why George Washington gave his fishing tackle to Dr. Craik and why Dr. Craik gave it to George Coryell is lost to history other than we know that they both knew Washington; Dr. Craik being his physician and George being a fellow Mason in the Alexandria Masonic Lodge who was close enough to Washington to have been invited to his private funeral service that was held at Mount Vernon for family and close associates only.

Further, we don't know why George gave the tackle box to his nephew Lewis S. Coryell (b. 12/20/1788) in April 1810 when George was 50 and still living in Alexandria and Lewis was 21 living in New Hope, PA. Was there an important event in Lewis' life, did he visit his uncle in Alexandria? That too is lost to history.

At the time the "Forest and Stream" article was written, the relics were in the possession of Anderson's nephew, Torbert Coryell (Anderson's wife, Cornelia, and Torbert's mother, Myra were sisters) who then lived in Martin Coryell's house on N. Union St. in Lambertville, NJ.

In 1958, Martin Coryell's then 82-year-old granddaughter (Torbert's niece), Camille Coryell Erisman Bryan, was living in Martin's house on N. Union St. in Lambertville. The last of her family, she donated the house (retaining life rights) to the First Presbyterian Church. According to a July 25, 1958 article in the Hunterdon County Democrat, she gave away historically valuable items where she deemed they would be most valued. She donated many of Martin's engineering books and papers to Rutgers University and she donated the fishing tackle box and its contents, that once belonged to George Washington, to Mt. Vernon.

As a matter of interest, in addition to my being the Archivist for the Lambertville Historical Society, my husband and I lived in Martin Coryell's house on N. Union St. for 15 years, having purchased it from the First Presbyterian Church in Lambertville in 1998. Some Lambertville residents may remember the Martin Coryell House B&B that we owned and operated in the early 2000s.

Our wonderful neighbor Esther Johnson (1925-2021), who knew Camille E. Bryan as they were both active in The First Presbyterian Church, had given us a copy of the July 25, 1958 article referenced above shortly after we bought the house. We became aware of the fishing tackle box and its relationship to George Washington but apparently many people in Lambertville did not know about it.

So, I was very excited to find Anderson's "Washington's Fishing Tackle" photograph in the Lambertville Historical Society archives along with the 1906 "Forest and Stream" article containing the history provided by Anderson. Anderson may very well have learned this history from George Coryell himself as he was 20 years old when George died in Lambertville.

This past December 2025, my husband and I, along with some friends, planned a visit to Alexandria, VA and Mt. Vernon. Though figuring it was a long shot, I contacted Mt. Vernon to see if I might see the fishing tackle box and its contents that Camille had donated. I was fortunate enough to get in contact with Genevieve King, Executive Assistant, Historic Preservation and Collections.

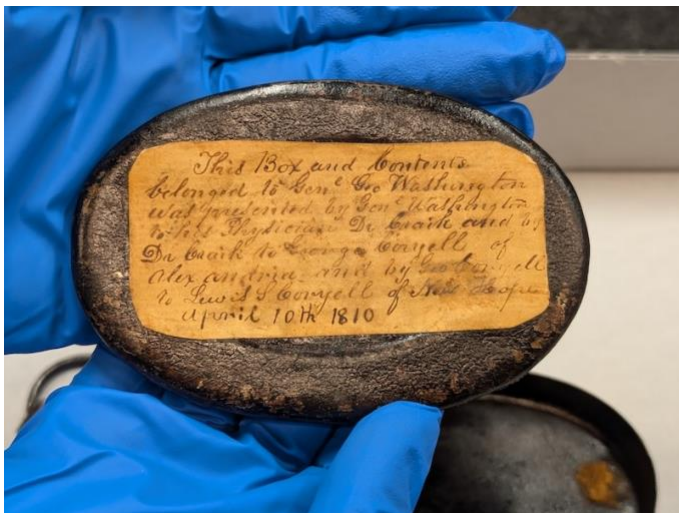
She and Brady Stroyke, Director of Collections Management and Exhibitions at Mount Vernon arranged to take us to the Conservation Complex and Volunteer Center (CCVC) at Mt. Vernon, where the fishing tackle box is currently stored, for a viewing of the tackle box and some of its contents. You can see from the Anderson photograph that there were actually 19 fish hooks in the tackle box. One fish hook along with the tacklebox, one piece of wax and two lines was plenty for us to view as seen in the below photo!



Washington's Fishing Tackle, copyright 1906 by John A. Anderson  
Lambertville Historical Society Collection

The digital library at Mount Vernon describes this case as:

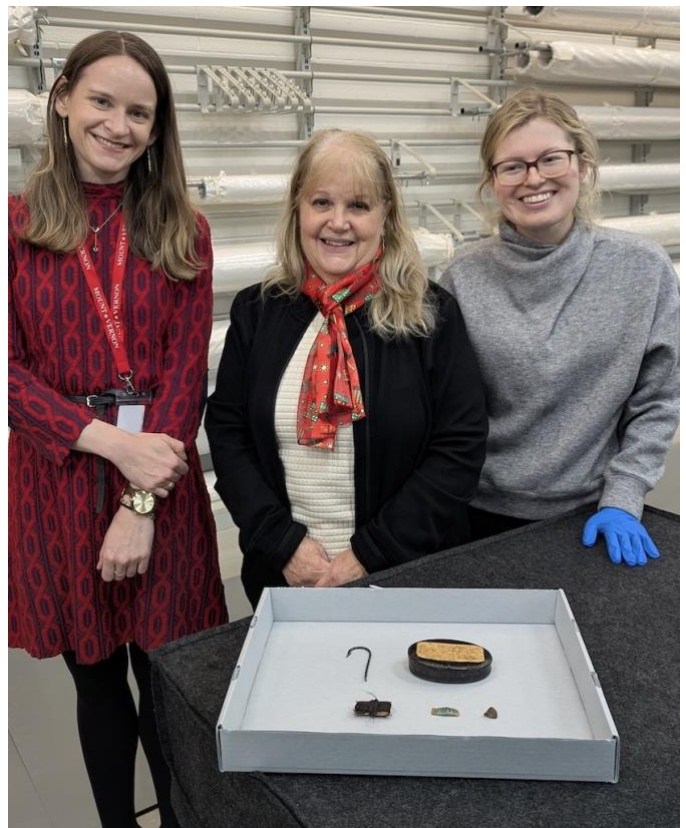
“This case may be the "Fishing Case for the Pocket - properly furnished with Line &ca," that Washington ordered from London in 1762. Its contents - hand-wrought hooks, horsehair and silk fishing lines, and wax for preparing the lines - provide a rare glimpse of the tackle typically used by fishermen in colonial America.”



Note on Tackle Box reads: This Box and Contents belonged to Gen'l Geo Washington was presented by Gen'l Washington to his physician Dr. Craik and by Dr. Craik to George Coryell of Alexandria and by Geo Coryell to Lewis S. Coryell of New Hope April 10, 1810. Photo: Rich Freedman

If you look closely at the photo that we took at Mt. Vernon with the note attached to the tackle box, you can confirm the information provided by John A. Anderson for the 1906 article.

Many Lambertville residents are aware of the importance of Coryell's Ferry during the Revolutionary War and that George Washington was headquartered here at least twice. And if you didn't know before, now you know that a native son helped carry the Father of our Country to his tomb and that he was once gifted a personal item belonging to George Washington and that item made its way home to Mt. Vernon thanks to George Coryell's great-great-niece!



From left: Genevieve King, Mary Freedman, Brady Stroyke viewing Washington's Fishing Tackle Box and contents at the CCVC at Mt. Vernon.

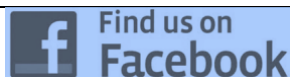
Photo: Rich Freedman

# LHS Calendar

Check this issue, the LHS website or our Facebook page (linked URLs for both below) for events and updates.

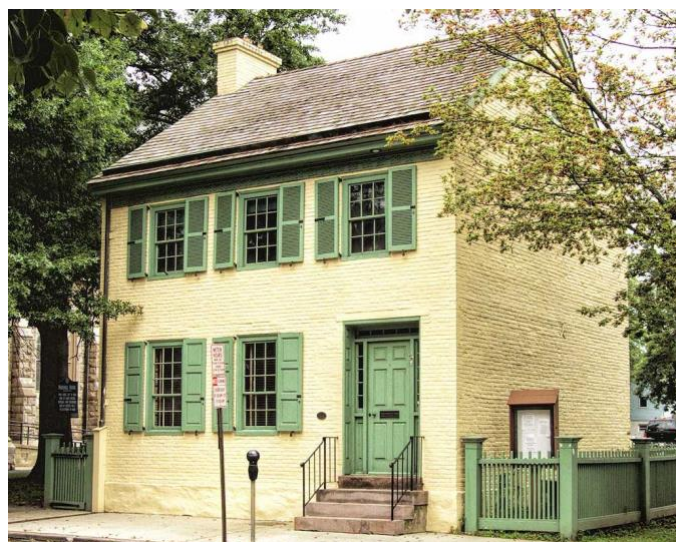


LHS sends *The Nugget* to members by email where they can read the full-color pdf version and have one less item to recycle unless they have been receiving a black and white print copy. **If you are interested in going back to paper, please call 609-397-0770 or write [info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org).**



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*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>	Jeffrey Campbell
<b>Treasurer</b>	Patrick Gallagher
<b>Secretary</b>	Chuck Hansen

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*The Nugget* is the quarterly newsletter of the Lambertville Historical Society © 2026. All previous issues are available on the LHS website.

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