

# The Nugget

Volume 8, Number 2

Spring 2019

*Lambertville Historical Society's  
Quarterly Newsletter*

*James Wilson Marshall House Museum*

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

## ***President's Message***

Everyone remembers their first job. The environment, the labor entailed, the boss and co-workers are usually recalled vividly and often fondly. Even if it was lousy, our first job can make us chuckle decades later. LHS is building on the accessibility and warmth of such memories in our oral history project. We aim to boost appreciation of Lambertville at work through the decades, while both educating and entertaining the community.

LHS has partnered with the Bucks County Playhouse (BCP) to cultivate storytelling experiences from residents' personal vignettes. During two workshops attended by people who grew up in the Lambertville area "in the old days," we've heard about "things that aren't there anymore" and we've had lots of laughs and a few tears, which remembrance can bring. Residents who couldn't attend have shared their stories through our online questionnaire: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/LambertvilleStories>.

First jobs we've learned about have included: starting as a Special Ed teacher in the early 70's; picking raspberries off Route 518 for 7 cents/pint in 1961; delivering the Trenton Times and the Saturday Evening Post; and serving as the cashier at the Rodeo Shop on S. Main Street [a 1955 advertisement lauded its authentic Western wear, square dance clothing, and rodeo and horse supplies].

Other early jobs for our participants have evoked Phil and Dan's Italian Kitchen [it preceded Rick's on S. Main Street], a longtime favorite of locals and celebrities like baseball hall of famer and broadcaster Phil Rizzuto; Belmont Forwarders [located in Canal Studios on N. Union Street], where in the 1960's teams packaged and shipped orders for Sears and Montgomery Ward; and a small shop where transmitters were manually assembled in 1955. Past businesses like the Strand Theatre, York Luggage, Diamond Silver, and the Crystal Place (in New Hope) have been referenced. Enterprises like Niece Lumber are still thriving.

If participation like this continues at upcoming workshops and online, LHS will be able to turn these memories into public experiences. We envision a custom online map of Lambertville that displays local commerce over time, with images and stories linked to establishments.

At the workshops, we haven't talked only about jobs. We've heard about special memories of growing up in Lambertville in the 1930's, 40's, 50's and 60's, and about memorable people. Participants have displayed artifacts, old newspapers and other memorabilia. Working with BCP and Lambertville Hall, LHS aims to turn these experiences and reminiscences into events for the public in the future. To ensure success, we need more participation and research. If you are interested in contributing to or assisting this project, please email or call us. It may not be your first job, but it will be rewarding.

***Mike Menche***

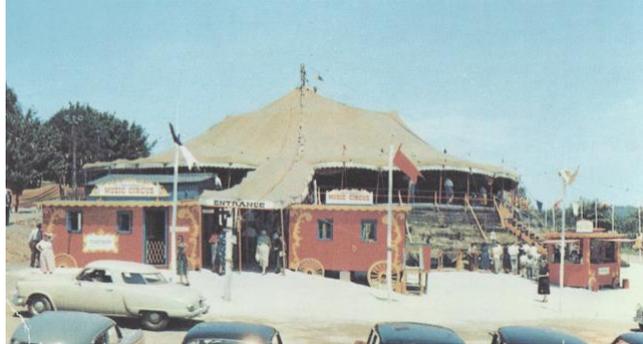
## ***Inside this issue of The Nugget***

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## April, May and June Events

### Magic on Music Mountain: Movie and Live Performance

Tuesday, April 9, 7:00 – 9:00 PM  
JB Kline & Son Gallery, 25 Bridge Street



Watch the 2014 documentary about St. John Terrell's remarkable theater - the Lambertville Music Circus - hosted by its producer, Gary Cohen. That's not all - Gary's group, The Back Porch Jugband, will play songs from their repertoire and classics from groups that played at the Music Circus. There will be musical guests, including JB Kline. Admission is free. Donations suggested to benefit the Lambertville Historical Society.

### Shad Fishing Demonstration and Visit to Lewis Island

LHS Members-only (and guests) Event  
Saturday, May 4, 10:30 AM

LHS members, join us (and bring guests) for a shad fishing demonstration on Lewis Island, home of the only commercially licensed shad fishery on the non-tidal Delaware. Our host will be fourth-generation shad fisherman Steve Meserve, who will tell us about the island, its history and structures and then, with luck, haul in some shad! For the fish eaters, there may even be some shad for sale. Steve's great-grandfather, William, established the Lewis Fishery in 1888. This program is free for LHS members and \$5 for your guests. We will meet in the parking lot behind 43 Lambert Lane, Lambertville, and walk across the bridge to Lewis Island.



### Membership Social and Walking Tour: Sunday, June 23

Our members-only walking tour of historic Lambertville begins at the Marshall House, 60 Bridge Street, at 2:00 PM and will bring walkers to the site of the social at 42 York Street by the 3:30 PM starting time where they will enjoy light refreshments. Non-walkers may join the reception at 3:30.

So we can plan for the necessary number of docents for the tour and make appropriate arrangements for food and drink, we ask that you RSVP by telephone to 609-397-0770 or by email to [info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org). Thank you.



#### Welcome New Members

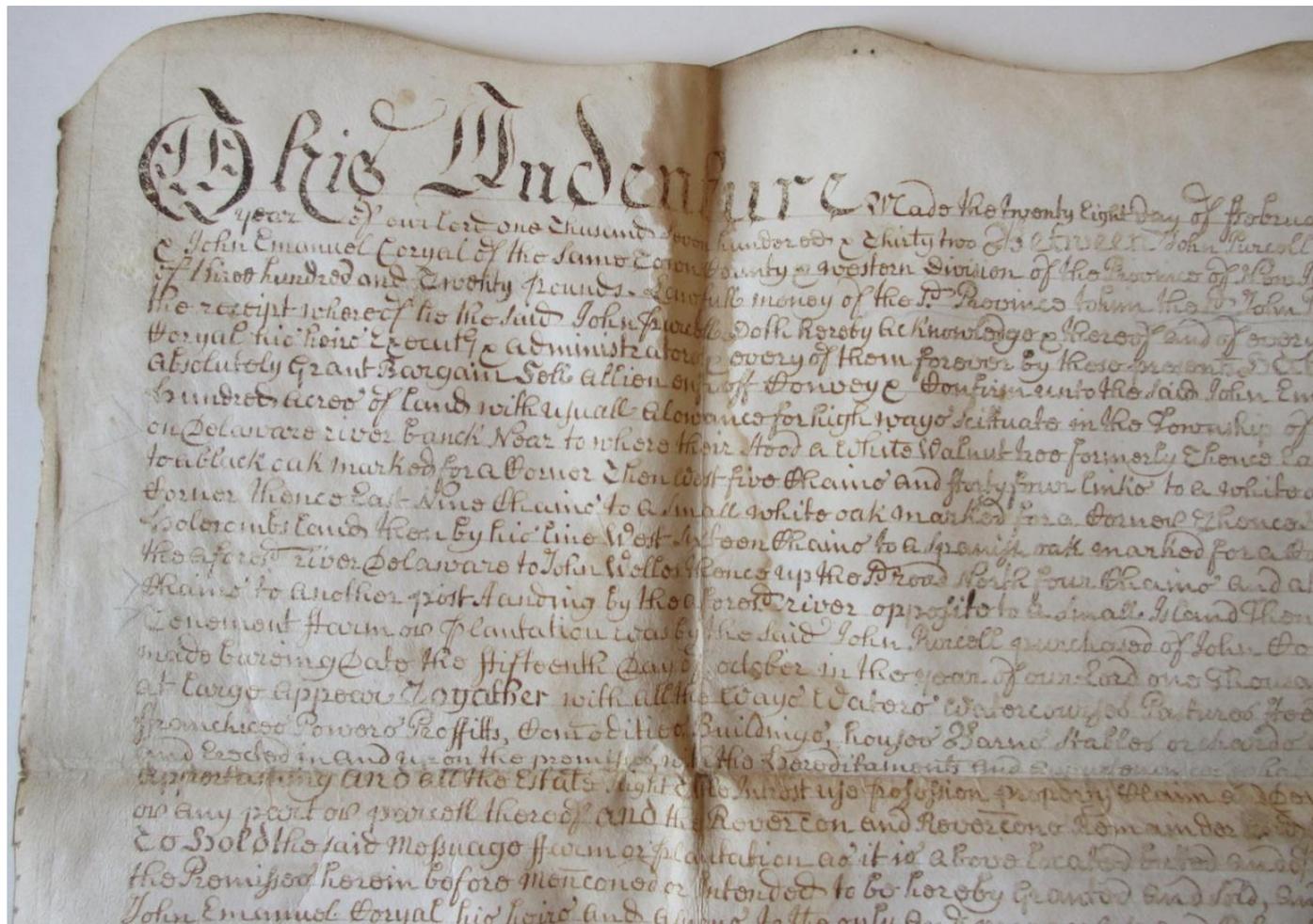
Patricia Christie  
Michael Fernandez  
Colette Kiveris & Family  
Susan Testa  
Carolyn "Amala" Viola & Peter Elston

#### Thank You for the Donations

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.

Charles Abbonizio  
Regina & Edward Hoag  
Marie Leithauser

In our previous issue of this newsletter we discussed the generous donation from the Closson Family of several historic documents, including *Last Wills* of both Emanuel Coryell and John Holcombe. At the Holcombe Estate Auction of last October, we also purchased two documents: an 1885 Sanborn Fire Map that shows the homes and industries of that era and an *Indenture* for transfer of land in 1732 (detail below). It's the latter we will discuss at this time.



At the auction, we knew that the 1732 deed involved the Coryell Family and this drove the bidding a bit. After winning the item, subsequent inspection showed the *Indenture* to be for the sale of 1000 Acres from John Purcell (various spellings) to Emanuel Coryell. Purcell was one of the operators of early ferry boats in our immediate area. Emanuel Coryell saw the opportunity to consolidate and improve the Ferry and the purchase of this land was his key acquisition. He also purchased the Ferry rights held by Purcell in a separate document. The area was developed into what we know as Ferry Street in Lambertville and this service across the Delaware River provided a reliable and favored link for travel between Philadelphia and New York City along York Road.

The *Indenture* is dated February 28, 1732, "...in the Sixth year of the Reign of our Sovereign George the Second..." The 1000 acres was sold for 320 Pounds payable in "lawful monies of the Provinces." It took very little time for Coryell to collect additional land, including properties and ferry rights on the Pennsylvania side of the river. Emanuel Coryell was then able to obtain exclusive rights for the ferry crossing from the British King on January 7, 1733.

The Ferry was so important that both sides of the river were named Coryell's Ferry. Although founded under a royal charter, by the time of the Revolutionary War the Coryell family sided with the Patriots against the Crown. They showed their loyalty to General Washington and his Army and provided safe crossings and assistance on many occasions.

The Coryell family ferry business prospered to the end of 18<sup>th</sup> Century. With completion of the 1814 bridge connecting the two towns, most traffic found this a more efficient route and the ferry service was less important.

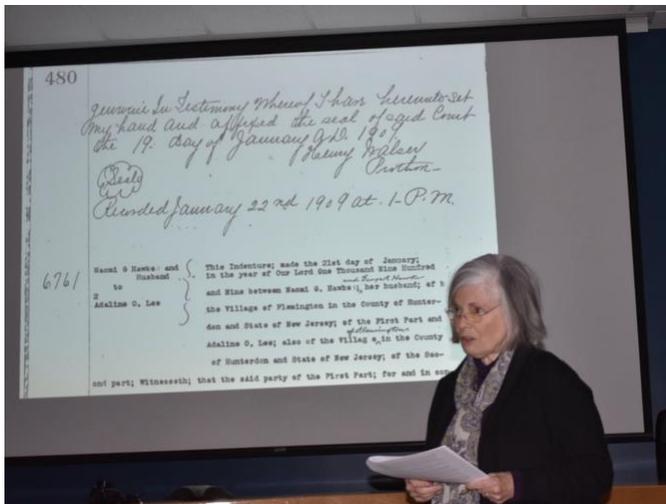
## Annual Meeting – January 20

A brief business meeting, approval of a new board and a wonderful presentation by historian Marfy Goodspeed on “how to Research the History of Your Home” comprised this year’s annual meeting.

At the program, which had more than 60 attendees, Ms. Goodspeed shared her vast experience in researching the history of Hunterdon County properties and provided some resources for those interested. They are definitely worth a look and are posted on the LHS website at <https://lambertvillehistoricalsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/PlansAndSourcesForDoingAHouseHistory.MarfyGoodspeed.pdf>.



Historian Marfy Goodspeed with new LHS president Mike Menche.



Ms. Goodspeed discusses an example of an old indenture (deed).

## Plein Air Plus 2019 – March 2

**Letter to the Editor:** (to local newspapers)

The Board of Trustees of the Lambertville Historical Society wish to thank the many people in our area who supported our seventh annual Plein Air Plus fundraiser. On Saturday, March 2, more than 200 people filled the Rago Arts & Auction Center to attend our silent auction benefiting the Historical Society and James Marshall House Museum. Guests enjoyed food, drinks and live music while bidding on 37 paintings produced by 23 New Jersey and Pennsylvania artists.

We particularly want to thank Rago Arts and Auction Center which has graciously donated the use of their space every year. Thanks to all our local businesses which donated outstanding food: Liberty Hall Pizza, Rojo’s Roastery, The Lambertville Station Restaurant and Inn, More than Q, Liv and Charlie’s, City Market, Marhaba, Inn of the Hawke, Logan Inn, Jamie Hollander, Nina’s Waffles, Karla’s, Anton’s at the Swan, The Swan Bar, Shop Rite of Flemington, Giant of New Hope, River Valley Realty, Caffe Galleria, The Chocolate Box, Bell’s Tavern, The Broadmoor, Under the Moon Café, Martine’s River House Restaurant and Wonderful World of Wine. We also want to thank The Lifters who provided fabulous music.

Thank you to event curator Ross Mitchell for hanging the paintings and of course, a huge thanks to all the artists for supplying the artwork: Jane Adriance, Anna Bis, James Bongartz, Gail Bracegirdle, Larry Chestnut, Renee Peletier Egan, Terri Fraser, Tom Furey, Aylin Green, Joe Gyurcsak, Bill Jersey, David Lawrence, Kathleen Hurley Liao, Tom Muscatello, Jo-Ann Osnoe, John Petach, Erica Rachel, Scott Riether, Materese Roche, Cindy Ruenes, SiriOm Singh, Annelies van Dommelen and Martha Wirkijowski.

Special thanks to the following individuals who helped in planning and coordinating the event: Holly Havens, Liz Riegel, Caroline Armstrong, Deborah Galen, Joan Millsaps, Naomi Drew and Suzanne Gitomer. And finally, thank you to all the volunteers who assisted at the event. We couldn’t do it without you!

Sincerely,

Laurie Weinstein  
Plein Air Plus Committee



Was Plein Air Plus fun? Just look.

Photo: Tom Muscatello

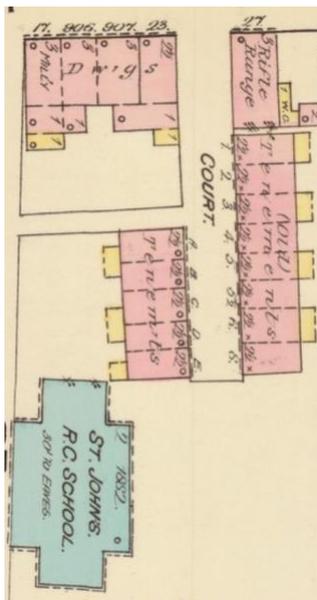
## Lambertville's Phantom Street: Blackwell's Court

Everyone is familiar with the major thoroughfares in town like Bridge and Union and most recognize the other streets downtown, while the roads up on Music Mountain, Cottage and Connaught Hills may be best known to their residents. However, there is one street that very few people have heard about – Blackwell's Court. It was (and officially is although on private property) a short street running south from Church Street between Gordon's Alley and North Main Street.

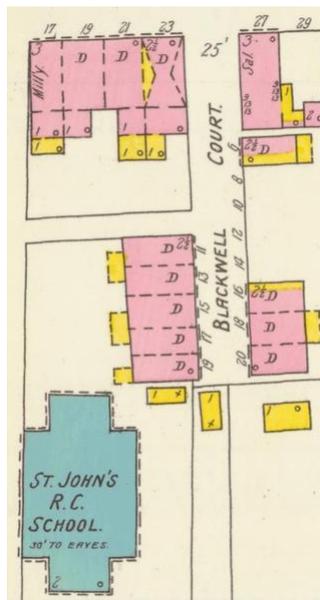
A Lambertville map from the 1873 Atlas of Hunterdon County shows 13 row houses, five on the west side and eight on the east). Meeting their subscribers' needs, the 1885 Sanborn Insurance maps provided greater detail. The 1885 edition showed that the buildings were brick, two and half stories high and described as tenements, likely meaning that they were apartments. The beautifully detailed 1883 aerial view of Lambertville (right) doesn't clearly denote most of the homes so they may have been obscured by the St. John's School building.



By 1897 all the Blackwell's Court houses were still standing but Sanborn described the eastern row as vacant and dilapidated apparently so much so that by 1902 four on the east side were gone. [Editor's note: If you like to stroll through Lambertville history via late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Sanborn Maps you can access them on the LHS website at <https://lambertvillehistoricalsociety.org/links> under "maps." Also check out the other interesting links while you're there.]



1885 Sanborn map



1902 Sanborn map



2006 City Tax Map



Blackwell's Court today, looking south from Church Street.

While not specifying the street, the historical book titled, *St. John the Evangelist Parish*, 1968, Custombook, Inc., described the accomplishments of Father Joseph F. Mahoney including the following paragraph:

The children of the parish needed room for recreation and in July, 1937, Father Mahoney purchased properties in the rear of the school, demolishing the buildings to transform the area into a playground.

St. John's parish continues to own the property of the former street which is now part of the parking lot and serves as an auxiliary exit onto Church Street. Blackwell's Court may be gone and mostly forgotten but it still exists and serves a purpose if no longer a home for Lambertville residents.

Thanks to Annette Eubank, St. John's parish historian for her input to this article. –Ed.

**Join, renew membership, or donate to the LHS at  
<http://LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org/membership>**

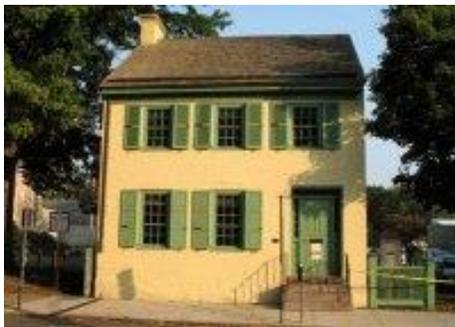
# LHS Calendar

Sunday, April 7 and first Sundays through November, 2:00 PM	<b>First Sunday Walking Tour of Historic Lambertville</b> , starting from the Marshall House, 60 Bridge St. Free but donations welcomed.
Saturday, April 27 and Sunday, April 28, 1:00 to 4:00 PM	Marshall House open weekends for the season through October.
Saturday, April 27 and Sunday, April 28, 2:00 PM	Walking tours leave from the Marshall House, 60 Bridge St. Saturday's tour is geared toward children and Sunday is the regular tour. They are both \$5 suggested donation but FREE for members.
Saturday, May 4 10:30 AM – 12 Noon	Shad Fishing Demonstration and Lewis Island Talk. Meet at parking lot behind 43 Lambert Lane. See box on page 2.
Sunday, June 23	Membership social at 42 York Street and optional walking tour. See page 2 for details.



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

LHS still wants to send *The Nugget* to members by email where they can read the full-color pdf version and have one less item to recycle. **More than a third of LHS members have signed up.** Why not join them? If you are interested, please write to [info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:info@LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org).



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### Our Mission

The Lambertville Historical Society promotes the preservation and appreciation of Lambertville's architecture and history through education and community involvement, as well as operates and maintains the James Wilson Marshall Museum.

The Marshall House is open from 1:00 to 4:00 PM on weekends between Shad Fest (normally the last weekend in April) and the end of October. Free admission.

### Officers

**President** Michael Menche  
**Vice President** Irene Rudolph  
**Treasurer** Laurie Weinstein  
**Secretary** Liz Riegel

### Trustees

Fred Eisinger                      Jeff McVey  
Deborah Galen                      Karen Taylor-Ogren  
Suzanne Gitomer                      Lou Toboz  
Mark Weinstein

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**Editor:** Fred Eisinger  
**Contributor:** Jeff McVey

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