

The Nugget

Volume 15, Number 4

Fall 2026

Lambertville Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

James Wilson Marshall House Museum

www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org

America @ 250  Let Freedom Ring



Take a new look at Lambertville's charming past and yummy present. Tours last 2.5 hours and include:

- Main-floor viewing, with historical commentary, of two gorgeous Victorian homes built in 1890 and 1891.
- Tour of **Jim's of Lambertville**, the renowned art gallery, spotlighting Bucks County Impressionist masterpieces.
- Tour of lower floor and main space of the **First Presbyterian Church**, founded in 1816.
- Tastings at these fine food purveyors: **Under The Moon** (empanadas), **Savour** (artisanal cheeses), **La Chocolate Box** (gourmet treats).

Only 25 people per guided tour. **Only 100 total tickets for sale!** Tickets must be purchased no later than October 10; no day-of sales. We walk rain or shine. Purchase tickets [now!](#)

Saturday October 17

\$55/members

\$65/non-members.

Spaces are limited.

10:30 am – 1:00 pm

11:00 am – 1:30 pm

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

2:00 pm – 4:30 pm

[Take a peek at the tour](#)

Hunterdon County Living History Day

Saturday, October 10, from 11 am to 4 pm at the South County Park Fairgrounds in Ringoes



Don't miss it: Hunterdon County celebrates the 250th anniversary of our nation's founding **with a bang!** Experience how New Jersey's patriots fought for independence with **musket drilling, cannon firing and a re-enactment of the skirmish** at Geary's Ridge. Food trucks, a DJ, a full army encampment and colonial artisans round out the fun. [Event](#) and parking are free.

Be sure to look for the Lambertville Historical Society's booth highlighting our town's importance in the War's opening years!

Join, renew membership, or donate to the LHS at

www.LambertvilleHistoricalSociety.org

THE "OTHER" CHURCHES OF LAMBERTVILLE

By Fred Eisinger

NOTE: Most of the historic religious information in this article was extracted from "That They All May Be One" the 2003 book by the Delaware Valley Council of Churches. Except as noted, images are from the Delaware & Raritan Canal Commission's Historic Structures Survey conducted in 1979-80 and published in 1982.

Most Lambertville residents and visitors easily picture the 19th century church buildings that help define Lambertville's cityscape: St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic, First Presbyterian, St. Andrew's Episcopal, Centenary Methodist (closed in 2024) and First Baptist (relocated to West Amwell Township in 2011). However, there were several others which served the various Christian faith needs over the years (there were no synagogues, mosques or Hindu temples in town) and here is a brief look at most of them.

Lambertville Friends Meeting

39 York St., constructed as a Ladies' Academy in the mid-19th century, Quakers were noted as worshipping there. The last mention of it as a religious space was in *The Beacon*



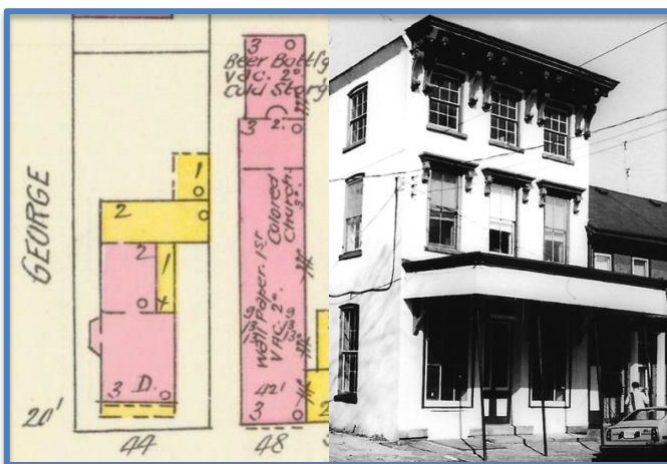
in 1885 although it was noted several times as the Friend's Meeting House when it hosted public events until it was given to the Kalmia Club in 1910 which had met in the building since the early 1890s. Interestingly, Kalmia owns the building while the city owns the land on which it stands.

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, 247 N. Main St. With roots in Germantown, Philadelphia, the first or second African-American church, was established in 1895 and built its own home in 1897 on Main. Undoubtedly, congregants came from surrounding areas as well. The 1900 census recorded 125 Black residents in Lambertville which increased to 275 by 1970 (the peak both numerically and percentagewise – 6.5%). It declined significantly after that time, as Lambertville gradually gentrified, numbering 75 or 76 in each of the last three enumerations. Although the church played a major role in the lives of congregants through the 20th century by the turn of the 21st the dwindling numbers became problematic and it had to sell the building in the early 2010s.



Historic Structures Survey left; author's March 2024 photo right shows the stone face "improvement" removed and provides a semblance of its original appearance.

Mt. Olive Second Baptist Church, 48 Coryell St. Formed in 1895 it may have been the first, or second, African-American congregation in town (noted as a Colored Church in the map below). The group worshipped in the mid-19th century building constructed to house a boot and shoe factory and then served various business enterprises. It is currently known as Boot Hall and is home to a commercial space and apartments. Mt. Olive did not last long as the Mt. Carmel Baptist eclipsed it in significance.



1897 Sanborn Insurance map

Lambertville Mennonite Church The congregation began in August 1949 with "Old fashioned Gospel Tent Meetings" on Connaught Hill sponsored by the Mennonite Youth Extension Committee. A formal church was authorized several years later with worship at 23 Belvidere Avenue where it continued until it disbanded in 1970.

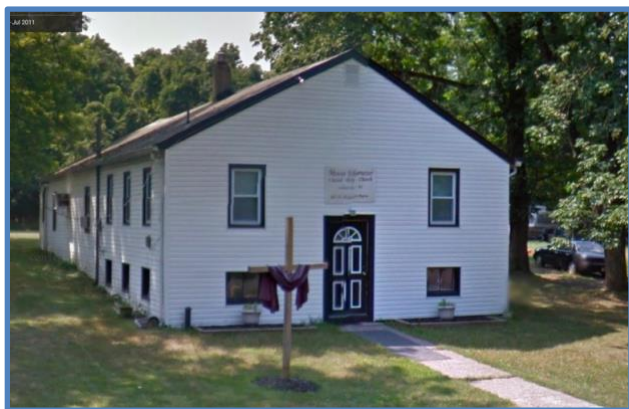
The church's brief moment in the spotlight occurred on April 12, 1965 when Lady Bird Johnson came to Lambertville to observe the new Head Start Program. Although the organization met at a downtown site, the first lady addressed a select group at the Mennonite Church on Connaught Hill, home to the poverty pocket known as the Commons.

Mt. Ebenezer United Holy Church, a predominantly African-American Pentecostal congregation soon followed

the Mennonite Church and began worshipping at 23 Belvidere Avenue in January 1973. The church opened an extension ministry in Trenton which included prayer services, a Bible Institute and food and clothing distribution ministry. Rev. Margaret Peyton led the congregation over the decades. Although it has not been active for a number of years, and its name removed from the facade, city tax rolls show that the building is still owned by the church.



From the April 13, 1965 *Trenton Evening Times* article on the visit of Lady Bird Johnson.



Google Street July 2011

Lambertville Assembly of God began around 1954 as a mission and acquired the building at 21 Ferry St. where it used the lower level as a sanctuary and continued until



closing in about 1970. The building later became the Ferry House restaurant and then Ota-ya, and is currently empty.

Lambertville Wesleyan Church was founded in 1940, when it met in homes and, later, in storefronts until it purchased the Tuscan villa stone mansion (built for iron foundry owner and former mayor William Cowin) at 119-121 N. Union Street in 1951 for \$18,000! In the 1980s the group bought land in West Amwell and began erecting a new church but various troubles caused it to be abandoned. Subsequently, the Cowin house became an art gallery, then an interior design studio before returning to a residence in 2005.



The services board at left and the "Jesus Saves" sign on the porch clearly indicate the mansion's role as a church.

Luz y Vida Eterna (Light and Eternal Life) A Pentecostal congregation serving a mainly Hispanic population worshipped at Mt. Carmel, Centenary Methodist and is currently at St. Andrew's Episcopal.



Historic Preservation Action in DC

By Karla Feuer

You've probably heard of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, a privately funded nonprofit which has worked for more than 75 years to preserve places of historic importance. Perhaps you've visited one of their 27 historic sites that are open to the public, as close as Cliveden in Philadelphia or as far as Acoma Sky City in New Mexico.

Recently, you may have learned that NTHP is the primary entity leading the lawsuit to stop the construction of President Trump's proposed White House ballroom where the East Wing once stood.

Yet you may not be aware of how you can be a part of their efforts, often without leaving home. The Washington DC-based NTHP frequently turns to grassroots supporters to help effect change at the local, state and federal levels, for example, advocating for pertinent tax credits, designations of public lands and the provision of preservation funding.

In September, the Trust rallied state and local preservation groups from across the country in a two-day summit and advocacy day. Their objective: to stave off proposed cuts to grant funding and protect regulatory provisions aimed at preserving the country's historical and cultural legacy.

Local preservationists met with congressional teams and committee staffers to urge them to protect the federal Historic Preservation Fund from drastic cuts proposed by the president—from \$181 million in 2026 to \$11 million in 2027.

Also on the agenda was opposition to a federal proposal that would dramatically diminish the effectiveness of current legal protections for historic and cultural places. As a member of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the Trust opposes The Council's plan to weaken the 60-year-old National Historic Preservation Act's Section 106, the foundational requirement for federal agencies to "take into account" the effects of their actions on historic properties and places, enabling public participation and comment in the process, empowering state and local governments. Preservationists across the country are mobilizing to fight this proposal and you can take action by implementing suggestions on the [Trust's website](#). At that page, you will also find other critical preservation issues and proposals that you can register your thoughts on, with instructions, sample letters and more to facilitate your advocacy.

Welcome New Members

Michele Findeis

Sherilyn Holcombe Waxler

In addition, once a year you can nominate an important place in your community that could benefit from national advocacy and attention. You can read the 2027 nominations for the list of America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

The Trust also has grant programs to help with local preservation efforts. It also conducts meetings and webinars on broad preservation issues and provides reading lists.

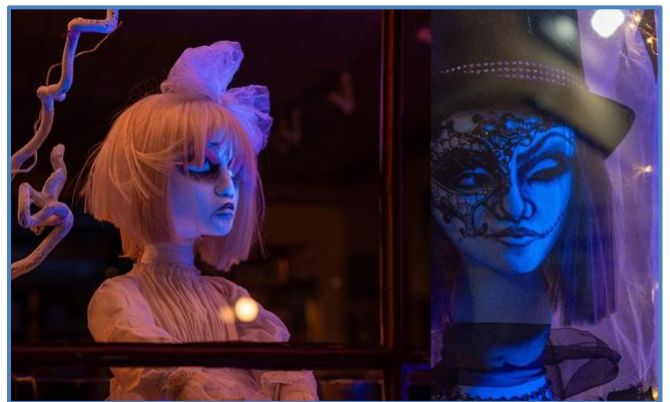
Individuals and organizations can join the Trust's Preservation Leadership Forum which connects preservation professionals, community leaders, planners, architects, and advocates with the tools, knowledge, and community they need to protect historic places. There are also individual memberships available.

The Trust is also part of the Historic Artists' Homes and Studios, a coalition of 93 member sites that were homes and studios of American artists. It is the only national organization dedicated to telling the story of our country's art history through their places, including Henry Chapman Mercer's Fonthill Castle in Doylestown.

The Ghosts of Marshall House

By Susan Craig

Noticed spectral faces peering back at you from James Marshall House? This year, Lambertville Historical Society joined the local businesses and organizations that say "boo!" to visitors and residents alike, as a sponsor of the Lambertville Creative Arts Fund's *Trail of Magic* event.



In October, the Trail brings the whimsical, wonderfully strange world of local artist Dolores Dragan to Lambertville, creating a walkable trail of art, imagination and discovery.

"Lambertville has long nurtured artists and imaginative spirits, and provided a nexus for bold creative work," said Michael Menche, president of the LHS board of trustees. "We view the preservation of this artistic heritage as one of our critical roles in the community."

The new Trail of Magic grew out of a tradition created by Dragan over decades. Her fantastical figures, expressive

faces and unmistakable sense of humor became a beloved part of Halloween in the city. Today, LCAF works to preserve that legacy while finding new ways for Lambertville and visitors to experience her art.

"The Trail is about more than Halloween," said Lisa Shippy-Woods, CEO of the Lambertville Creative Arts Fund and a trustee of the LHS. "It's about wandering through town, discovering something unexpected in a window, and experiencing Lambertville at its most creative. The new audio tour gives people another way to follow the trail and become part of the story."

The Memory Maker's Trail of Magic is free and open to the public throughout October. Visitors are encouraged to make a day - or a weekend - of it, exploring the displays while enjoying Lambertville's shops, restaurants, galleries and historic streets. New this year, visitors can experience the Trail through a free audio tour, making it even easier to explore the locations that bring the event to life.

High Praise for the Holcombe Homestead's Corn Crib and Barn

By Michael Menche

Holcombe Park is Lambertville's historic treasure, purchased by the City of Lambertville from the Closson-Holcombe family, who were stewards and residents for seven generations. Recently we invited two experts to tour the property, each having done so previously, to capture some of their observations and assessments. Jeffrey L. Marshall is a renowned conservator with more than 40 years of combined experience in land protection and historic preservation, and an author of several books on the architecture of southeastern Pennsylvania. Read more about [Jeff](https://buckscountymag.com/Community/jeffrey-marshall-retires/) here: <https://buckscountymag.com/Community/jeffrey-marshall-retires/>. Michael Cuba is a historic preservationist, timber framer, and dendrochronologist specializing in the documentation, assessment, and restoration of historic timber-framed structures and agricultural barns ([visit his website](#)).



The corn crib (above) is an American design, created to store the New World crop. Native Americans such as the Lenni Lenape invented the elevated, ventilated corn crib to best protect corn, stored on the cob, from moisture and pests, and to prevent molding. The Holcombe corn crib was built in 1762 according to dendrochronology. A single crib (in contrast to double drive-through cribs that became common later), it remarkably exhibits both Colonial American traditions such as loosely spaced posts and "beautiful hewn oak braces," as well as "English tying joints at the gable," according to the experts. Michael Cuba said, "This building is worth its weight in gold from a historical perspective."



The Holcombe barn (above), built largely of oak, dates to 1764. Its frame preserves "true marriage marks" made with a race knife to match timbers together, about which Jeff Marshall said, "I've never seen American work like that anywhere else." The experts pointed out many marvelous details, such as beams that were slightly arched toward the center to resist bending, a technique Michael Cuba called "induced camber." "Talk about fantastic—what a treat! This barn really has everything," Michael Cuba said. "This is absolutely one of the best barns in Hunterdon County, if not New Jersey."

Stay tuned on our [blog](#) for many more observations by the experts, accompanied by interior photos of these extraordinary buildings, as well as the Holcombe house.

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.

Merle Citron
Sharon Bisaha
Tony Lockwood



"I am well aware of the Toil and Blood and Treasure, that it will cost Us to maintain this Declaration [of Independence], and support and defend these States."

John Adams to Abigail Adams, July 3, 1776

Summer/Fall 1776: Retreat through New Jersey

- Jun 26 Already under house arrest since Jan 1776, royal New Jersey Gov. William Franklin is imprisoned on orders from New Jersey Provincial Congress
- Jun 29 45 British ships drop anchor in New York Harbor, off Staten Island
- Jul 2 NJ approves state constitution
- Aug 15 The invasion force eventually encompasses 32,000 British and Hessian soldiers, and 12,000 sailors
- Aug 27 to 29 Battle of Brooklyn ends in defeat, as Gen. Henry Clinton outflanks Continental Army. Washington retreats to Manhattan
- Aug 29 John Hart, of Hopewell (NJ) signatory of the Declaration, chosen as Speaker of the New Jersey General Assembly
- Sep 15 British occupy New York City
- Sep 20 to 21 Great Fire of New York
- Oct 28 British again outflank the Continentals at White Plains (NY). Washington retreats near Armonk
- Nov 16 Gen. William Howe overwhelms Gen. Nathaniel Greene's forces at Ft. Washington (Manhattan)
- Nov 19 Washington stationed near Ft. Lee (NJ)
- Nov 20 Gen. Greene, facing an overwhelming force led by Lt Gen. Charles Cornwallis, retreats from Ft. Lee (NJ)
- Nov 18 to Dec 2 Washington moves thru New Jersey towards Trenton: from Hackensack to Passaic, Newark, and New Brunswick
- Nov 30 Declaration signatory Richard Stockton of Princeton is arrested in Freehold (NJ)
- Dec 8 to 14 Washington crosses the Delaware to Bucks County (PA), with headquarters in Morrisville and Upper Makefield
- Dec 13 Gen. Charles Lee captured in Basking Ridge (NJ) by the British

Stay tuned: Crossing the Delaware and pivotal battles in Trenton and Princeton

Learn more:

Podcasts:

[Ben Franklin's World](#) recently included an [interview](#) with Jeremy Johnson, the Cultural Education Director of the Delaware Tribe of Indians. His topic included the fate of White Eyes, the Lenape tribal leader who attempted to negotiate his tribe through the beginning of the war.

Books:

Two books examine the meaning of Independence—then and now:

- Francis Cagliano, ed. *The American Revolution at 250*, 2026. (Essays from prominent historians.)
- Edward J. Larson, *Declaring Independence: Why 1776 Matters*, 2025.

Two one-volume surveys of the political and military events of the Revolution and the War itself are:

- Benson Bobrick, *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution*, 1998.
- Robert Middlekauff, *The Glorious Cause: The American Revolution, 1763-1789*, 2007.

Rutgers University has published a series of books devoted specifically to New Jersey's place in the rebellion and the War:

- James J. Gigantino, editor, *The American Revolution in New Jersey; Where the Battlefield Meets the Home Front*, 2015. (More essays.)
- Maxine Lurie, *Taking Sides in Revolutionary New Jersey; Caught in the Crossfire*, 2022.

Two famous patriots were arrested in 1776, events with huge repercussions in NJ for the war and the fight to maintain independence. See:

- The implications of Richard Stockton's arrest and recanting of his signing is examined in Lurie's *Taking Sides*, noted above.
- John Shy, in *A People Numerous and Armed; Reflections on the Military Struggle for American Independence*, (1976), examines the relationship of Washington and Charles Lee before his arrest.



Charles Lee hands his sword to British Dragoons at White's Tavern, on Dec 13. Published in London, circa 1781-83.

LHS Walking Tours

You have two more chances to get your steps in:

First Sunday of the month,

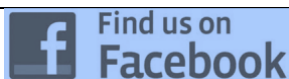
October 4 and November 1

Walks leave from the Marshall House, 60 Bridge St., at 2 PM

Check this issue, the [LHS website](#) or [our Facebook page](#)
(links also below) for **other** 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**



www.facebook.com/LambertvilleHistory



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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

President	Michael Menche
Vice President	Jeffrey Campbell
Treasurer	Patrick Gallagher
Secretary	Chuck Hansen

Trustees

Denise Adamucci	John Franzini
Susan Craig	Edward Hoag
Fred Eisinger	Phil Mackey
William Falk	Tom Ogren
Karla Feuer	Lisa Shippy-Woods

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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