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*February 2012*

## **The Milestones: Ancient Landmarks**

If you are not familiar with these landmarks, be sure to [read this background story](#) about the location and purpose of Lower Merion's fine collection of historic objects.

More than a year ago, Milestone #5 located on Lancaster Avenue near St. Charles Seminary in Wynnewood, was severely damaged when a car along this busy roadway hit it. It could not be repaired and the Historical Society, in partnership with West Laurel Hill Cemetery, took on the task of replacing this Milestone. Here is the [story about the "5 M to P" Milestone](#).



*(from left to right) West Laurel Hill Cemetery staffers Chris Bentley, Joe Grohne and Bill Doran with Lower Merion Historical Society Board member Dennis Montagna. Check out these [additional photos](#) that were taken by Max Buten.*

## **Creative MontCo Workshop**

[Creative MontCo](#) is a bold partnership of community members and organizations developing a comprehensive cultural and creative economy plan for communities throughout the county. Creative MontCo is dedicated to making Montgomery County a



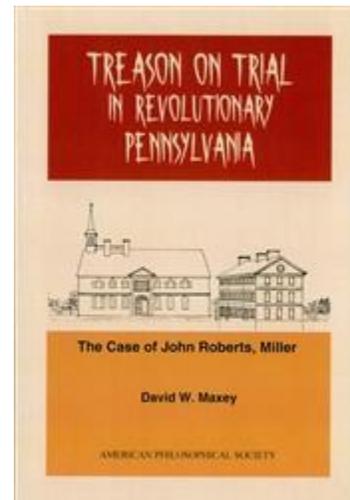
more vibrant place to live, work and play.

On January 19th at the Lower Merion Academy, Ross Mitchell of the Historical Society hosted a workshop that was attended by representatives of historical societies, historic sites and preservation groups to discuss their vision for a Creative Montgomery County. In order to strengthen

the cultural life of the county there was a discussion of ideas, concerns, hopes and expectations on the role of history, historic sites and preservation in our communities. The facilitator for the group discussion was Martin Cohen of the Cultural Planning Group. They would like to hear from you, [please take their survey.](#)

## A New Book about our John Roberts

A monograph, written by David Maxey of Gladwyne, titled *Treason on Trial in Revolutionary Pennsylvania: The Case of John Roberts, Miller* has just been published by the American Philosophical Society and is being distributed by [Diane Publishing Company](#).



In the fall of 1778 John Roberts, a prosperous Quaker miller who owned valuable property located about ten miles from Philadelphia, stood trial before a jury that found him guilty of having committed treason. He was charged with having betrayed the patriot cause and the nascent government of Pennsylvania by joining the British when they had earlier occupied Philadelphia. If not entirely innocent, did Roberts nevertheless deserve a trip to the gallows a month after the jury returned its verdict? Relying on two long-neglected contemporary records of this treason trial, David Maxey explores in depth the issue of Roberts's guilt while capturing the atmosphere of confusion, conflicting loyalties, political bickering, and religious tension that prevailed in and around Philadelphia during that period. This is a study, replete in characters and contradictions, of the American Revolution as a civil war that divided neighbors and neighborhoods and of pardon that came haltingly when it came at all.

## Mapping West Philadelphia: Landowners in October 1777



This is a web-based, geographic data application, developed by the *University of Pennsylvania's University Archives and Records Center* from research provided by James M. Duffin. The website is designed to assist scholarly research and the general public in efforts to analyze, interpret and understand the history of the growth of West Philadelphia and the greater Philadelphia area at the time of the American Revolution. This research tool is a work-in-

progress which will be updated on a periodic basis. See Lower Merion as it was in 1777. [Click here](#) to read more about this resource. [Click here](#) to see the interactive map.

Leon Levine and The Lower Merion Historical Society were very helpful in providing access to GIS data and historical maps that were invaluable in helping to plot the historical property lines in Lower Merion Township.

Happily, the Historical Society served as a catalyst in advancing these important research efforts by David Maxey and James M. Duffin. In 2009, David Maxey approached the Historical Society for information about John Roberts neighbors in Ardmore in 1778 for use in his new monograph.. This led to a helpful pooling of knowledge between between the Historical Society and the University of Pennsylvania project.

The Pennsylvania Historical Society owns the manuscript of a map prepared in the early 20th Century by Benjamin Smith - *Atlas of delaware county and the great welsh tract, pennsylvania; showing the early grants/patents*. David Maxey funded digital copies of the Lower Merion map sheet for use by the Historical Society and the University.

In a few months we hope to report on further efforts by the Historical Society to map the earliest property lines in Lower Merion Township.

## **Building Photographs: To Preserve Today for Tomorrow's History**

Our February photo from [www.lowermerionhistory.org/buildings/](http://www.lowermerionhistory.org/buildings/) is part of our history:



It's the shop and home of a 19th century craftsman, Ernst Giersch. This picture belongs to his grandson, Dr Herman Giersch, whom many of us know from the Lower Merion schools - where he was music teacher, band leader, piano tuner, composer.

The building is gone, but [here](#) are photos of then and now, with the latest changes in December.

To learn more about the Giersch family, be sure to tune into the show *Living History with Ted Goldsborough*. It is available on Lower Merion Township's Government Access Channel (LMTV) which broadcasts on Comcast XFINITY Channel 7 and Verizon FiOS Channel 37. Any resident in Lower Merion or Narberth who subscribes to these providers can view LMTV. The February and March installments will feature Dr. Herman Giersch. This show is replayed every Monday, Wednesday, Friday at 8:30am and 8:30pm. The Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday schedule is 3:30am and 3:30pm.

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The March issue will feature our plans for our Bicentennial Gala for the Lower Merion Academy.

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## ***Favorite Links***

- [Lower Merion Historical Society's Website](#)
  - Our [Preserve America Website](#)
  - [Membership Information](#)
  - [Buy Our Books](#)

### ***MISSION STATEMENT OF THE LOWER MERION HISTORICAL SOCIETY***

The Lower Merion Historical Society is an organization dedicated to *Preserving Our Past For The Future*. This is accomplished by stewardship of local history, education of the community, preservation of historic resources and outreach to promote awareness of the cultural heritage of the Township of Lower Merion and the Borough of Narberth.

