



January 2025

Happy New Year from your Historical Society!

Year in Review

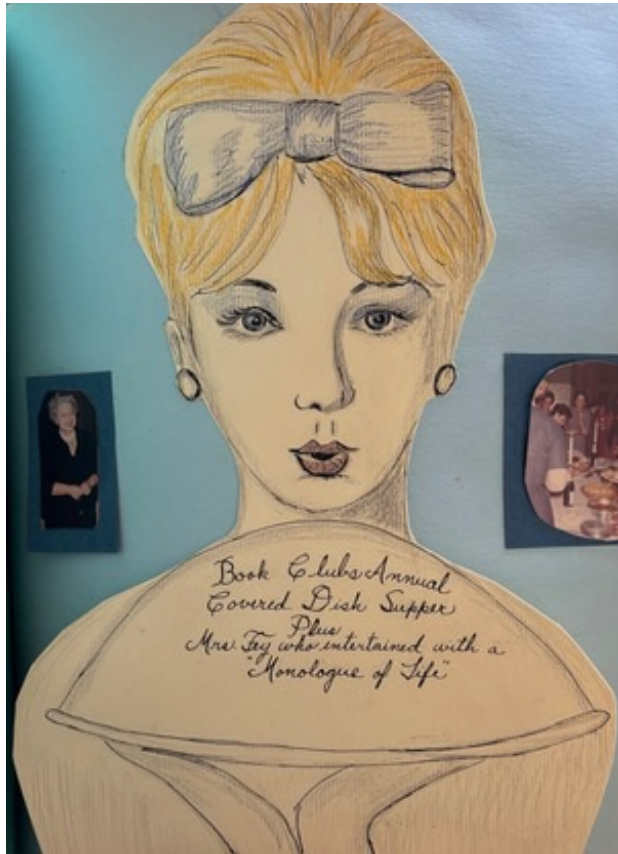
2024 was a big year for the Lower Merion Historical Society as we celebrated our 75th anniversary and continued to build on a strong foundation through careful strategic planning.

We engaged with our community through 16 events, ranging from [presentations](#) on the history of slavery in our area and the [history of our public school buildings](#), to dedication ceremonies for a [PA Historical Marker honoring trailblazing women](#) who called Bala Cynwyd home and informational plaques marking a near-forgotten Civil War camp in Gladwyne (more information below), to a tour of our historic cemeteries and walking tours of the community highlighting contributions of distinguished art historian Paul B. Moses and early architect Minerva Parker Nichols. We reached over a thousand people through these programs, and look forward to many more in 2025.

Our Administrative Coordinator Paige Bartello and our intrepid volunteers have been busy reorganizing, rehousing, and cataloguing our collections, and this year we look forward to debuting our new collections management software.

In the spirit of giving and receiving, all this is only possible through your financial support. Consider kicking off this year with a donation [here](#).

Announcing a grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission!



A sneak peek of what's to come in 2025! This beautiful illustration is from a Woman's Club of Bala Cynwyd scrapbook, 1960-1961.

We accepted the archives of the Club this past spring, and we are pleased to announce we have been awarded a Historical and Archival Records Care Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to process this collection. We will be hard at work this spring and summer rehousing

and preserving over 100 years of records.

Upcoming Programs

Sunday, January 19 | 10 AM - 5 PM

Step back in time and have your portrait captured through the fascinating art of tintype photography! We invite you to experience this authentic 19th-century photographic process at the historic Lower Merion Academy Building.

These one-of-a-kind metallic portraits have a haunting beauty and timeless quality that modern photography simply can't replicate. While you're here, learn more about early photographic processes, and view rare examples from our collection.

There are only 9 portrait sessions left, so [secure your session](#) now.



Sunday, February 9 | 11 AM

We will be offering a Lower Merion Historical Society members-only curatorial tour of *Philadelphia Revealed: Unpacking the Attic*, a major exhibition reflecting 350 years of Philadelphia history at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts!

The tour will be offered by one of Lower Merion Township's most distinguished historians and Chief Curator of the exhibition, Page Talbott, Ph.D. Stay tuned for more information about registration for this exclusive event by email, social media, and on our website.

And in Case You Missed It...

To close out a dynamic year, the Historical Society hosted three programs showcasing our growing community collaborations.

1) Marker Dedication of [Camp Discharge](#), Gladwyne. In late November, an enthusiastic crowd gathered at the Philadelphia Country Club to watch the dedication of a pair of historic markers on the site of a long-forgotten Civil War military base.

Camp Discharge was erected by the Union Army in 1864 to help over a thousand soldiers return from the battlefield back to civilian life. Once the camp was dismantled at the end of the war, it was all but forgotten.

But Historical Society Board member Brad Upp knew it once existed. He uncovered many artifacts and researched the history—and Camp Discharge was rediscovered. The colorful dedication featured dozens of uniformed Civil War re-enactors, including a military band performing period music. Presenters included Brad and Jim Remsen, co-authors of a 2021 book about Camp Discharge “Back from Battle”, as well as Capt. Bridget Wilby, an Iraq War veteran who assisted in the early research for the book. The markers are permanently accessible to the public via the Sid Thayer trail stretch of the Bridlewild Trail Network.



Historical Society Board member Brad Upp next to one of the newly dedicated "Camp Discharge" historical markers; Brad was joined by Board member Jim Remsen at our informational table at the Dickens Festival.

2) “It was the best of times” as the Lower Merion Historical Society participated in Narberth’s beloved annual Dickens Festival. Once a year, Narberth is transformed into 1840’s London, as Ebenezer Scrooge, Tiny Tim, and all the characters from “A Christmas Carol” roam the streets for an afternoon. We enjoyed speaking with local history lovers about Lower Merion and Narberth lore.

3) Board member Jim Remsen and Jim Bevlock fielded numerous questions from our community as they presented their research on the history of Bala Cynwyd and its indeterminate boundaries at the Annual Meeting of the

Historical Society Rewind

What do your winter festivities look like? Bill Harris, staff photographer for the *Main Line Times*, captured these images of Lower Merionites enjoying the season in the 1950s and 60s.

The Bill Harris collection of photographs includes hundreds more amazing prints spanning his 50-year career. This collection isn't just great for research – it's an adventure back in time! You can peruse this collection and so much more during our public open hours on Wednesday evenings, 7:00pm-9:00pm, at our headquarters in the Lower Merion Academy Building, 506 Bryn Mawr Ave, Bala Cynwyd PA 19004.



Visit us online:

[About Us](#)

[Membership Information](#)

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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.

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