



October 2024

Happy Halloween!

Back to School with Our New Banner



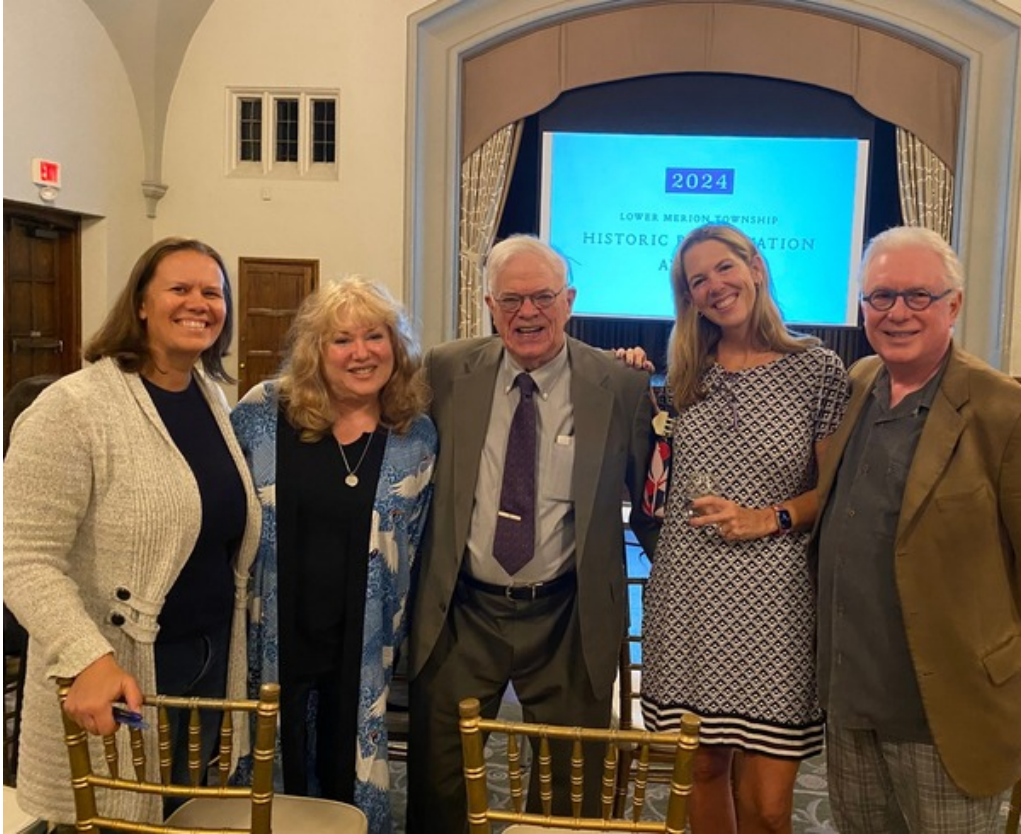
The campuses of Bala Cynwyd Middle School and Cynwyd Elementary School are now in full swing with the start of classes and before-and after-school activities. We have a new banner that greets students, staff, parents, and community members who might

otherwise pass by our location in the Lower Merion Academy Building without awareness of what the building represents and what is inside. This welcoming addition helps showcase our historic building as a vibrant center of learning and community engagement, ensuring that the legacy of education in Lower Merion continues to be visible and celebrated by all who pass by.

Congratulations, Ted Goldsborough!

In September, our President Emeritus Ted Goldsborough was honored by

Lower Merion's Historical Architectural Review Board and Historical Commission with the Robert DeSilets award. The award honors [Ted's lifetime of contributions](#) to historic preservation efforts through dedicated support and involvement. His tireless work has helped preserve countless pieces of Lower Merion's heritage for future generations, making him a most deserving recipient of this prestigious recognition.



Ted is joined by (l to r) Lower Merion Historical Society Board members Erin Betley, Jamie Singer, and Kate Jiggins, and former Board member and current Advisory Committee member Ross Mitchell.

Keep History Alive



*Lower Merion-Radnor football game at Lower Merion High School field in 1925.
Final score: Lower Merion 12, Radnor 0. (Robert Swartz, Lower Merion Historical Society)*

Are you interested in history? Do you want to give back to your community?

Join a special committee at the Lower Merion Historical Society and help ensure our success!

With a minimal time commitment, you can share your expertise and network and make a BIG difference.

For the last 75 years, the Lower Merion Historical Society has worked hard to “Preserve Our Past for the Future.” We need your help to make it another 75!

To inquire or volunteer, please email us at info@lowermerionhistory.org.

Thank you for your support!

Collections Update

October is American Archives Month, and we are pleased to share that Pennsylvania Western University Master's student Xandra O'Neill has completed a most productive archives-based internship with us! Under the guidance of Administrative Coordinator Paige Bartello, she inventoried and

rehoused hundreds of documents in our entire flat file collection over the summer, improving archival preservation and making the collections easier to navigate. When she wasn't deep in our collection, she was drafting a guide to using our collections to aid in genealogical research, and an overview of the history of the Jewish community in Lower Merion Township. We look forward to hosting community programs where Xandra can share her research findings.

Upcoming Programs

Mark your calendars:

Saturday, November 23 | SAVE THE DATE

Save the date of November 23 for a dedication ceremony for two historical markers for [Camp Discharge](#), a near-forgotten Civil War camp in Gladwyne. More details to come.



Sunday, January 19 | 10 AM - 5 PM

Step back in time and have your portrait captured through the fascinating art of tintype photography! On Sunday, January 19, the Historical Society invites 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. Space is limited for this unique opportunity, so [secure your portrait session](#) now. Don't miss your chance to become part of photographic history!



And in Case You Missed It...

This month, the Historical Society hosted two programs showcasing our growing community collaborations.

- On October 5, the Society partnered with the Narberth Historical Architectural Review Board and the Lower Merion Conservancy on a standing-room only book talk at Narberth Bookshop and neighborhood walk about early woman architect [Minerva Parker Nichols](#). The event was led by Molly Lester, Associate Director of the Urban Heritage Project at the University of Pennsylvania, and William Whitaker, curator of the Architectural Archives at Penn, co-authors of a new book “Minerva Parker Nichols: The Search for a Forgotten Architect” that features several homes she designed in the late 1800s in what was known as Elm (the town name was changed to Narberth in the late 1893).



A scene from the book talk in Narberth Bookshop; Attendees prepare to tour the lovingly maintained “Millwood Justice House” at 1104 Montgomery Avenue, built by Nichols in 1889-1890.

- On October 13, the Society organized a Cemeteries Open House featuring four of the township’s earliest cemeteries: Merion Friends Meeting House Burying Ground, Harriton Family Cemetery, Saint Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church Cemetery, and Lower Merion Baptist Church Cemetery. Though small in size, these cemeteries remain active burial sites and reflect diverse burial traditions and

monument styles. After the open house, attendees gathered for a reception at the Lower Merion Academy Building to share what they learned.



Each cemetery participating in the Open House program was represented by an interpretative guide and included informational signage.

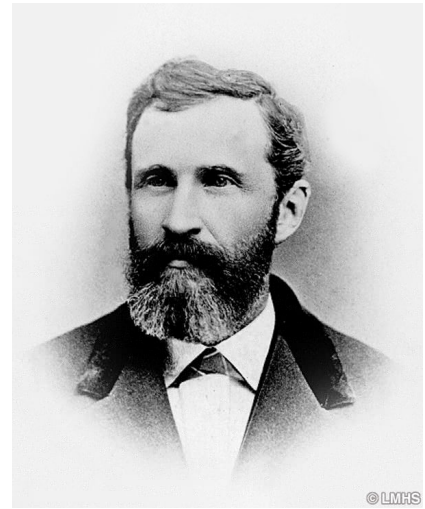
Historical Society Rewind



The Lower Merion Academy Building, our home since 2002, stands as a living testament to our community's rich educational heritage. Built in 1812, it was revolutionary for its time—opening its doors in 1813 to all students regardless of religion or gender. Today, as visitors climb to our

second-floor quarters, they're walking through one of Lower Merion's oldest surviving public buildings, where learning has continued uninterrupted for over two centuries.

The building itself holds fascinating secrets. In the third-floor attic, where students once boarded, you can still see their penciled graffiti in dormer window alcoves—intimate glimpses of school life from the early 1800s. The Academy's prestigious history includes Headmaster Clifford Levering, whose family name lives on in Levering Mill Road. The Leverings, longtime township residents and paper mill owners, left their mark in other ways too: John Levering crafted one of the township's earliest maps in 1851.



In 2002, the Academy Building was rightfully recognized on the National Register of Historic Places, along with its educational neighbors—the 1914 Cynwyd Elementary School and 1938 Bala Cynwyd Junior High School. This designation marked a new chapter for our organization, as we

relocated from Ashbridge House in Bryn Mawr to continue our mission of preserving Lower Merion's rich history in a building that embodies it.

Next month, we'll feature the book published by the Historical Society over 20 years ago: "The First 300: The Rich and Amazing History of Lower Merion." Do you have a copy of this book in your library? Did you know that the contents are [available online](#) too?



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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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