



# The Haverford Herald

Fall 2019

Newsletter of the Haverford Township Historical Society

Our 80th Year

[www.haverfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.haverfordhistoricalsociety.org)

## OKTOBERFEST IS FRIDAY, OCT. 4, 7-10 PM



For a relaxed, fun evening at Nitre Hall, come to our 12th annual outdoor Oktoberfest! This year it will feature our usual beer garden with a selection of seasonal beers and light German-themed refreshments. Live, low-key bluegrass style music will be provided by The Blue Moon Band. Inside Nitre Hall we will be holding "chance raffles" on a variety of great items, including donations from Panera, Applebee's, Oakmont Roots, Sampan Inn, J D McGullicuddy's and many more. Get as many raffle rickets as you want (HTHS members get some free), and you can stuff the individual bags for any and all items that

strike your fancy! This is always a great evening, a great chance to socialize and an important fundraiser for HTHS. All are welcome. You can pay "at the door" (\$30 cash or check) or on our website (\$30 plus \$1.15 Paypal fee). See you there!

## HTHS FALL MEETING AND PROGRAM: THE FLU PANDEMIC OF 1918

Our annual Fall general membership meeting and public program will be held on **Tuesday, October 15 at 7 PM**, at the Haverford Township Free Library, in partnership with our friends at the library. All are welcome to attend the program.



Robert Hicks of the Mütter Museum at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia will give an illustrated presentation on the horrendous influenza pandemic which swept the nation in 1918, particularly on its impact in Philadelphia.

*"What happens when disease strikes a city of two million people, sickening half a million and killing more than 12,000 in just six weeks and 16,000 in two months? During fall, 1918, in the last months of World War I, Philadelphia hosted the largest parade in its history. Within days, influenza casualties overwhelmed hospitals."*

Dr. Hicks will discuss the pandemic as a social catastrophe and consider its memorialization today. He will share highlights of the museum's current and most ambitious exhibition to date, "Spit Spreads Death: The Influenza Pandemic of 1918-19 in Philadelphia."

Robert D. Hicks, PhD is the director of the Mütter Museum and Historical Medical Library, as well as the William Maul Measey Chair for the History of Medicine at The College of Physicians of Philadelphia. He formerly supervised exhibits, collections, and educational outreach at the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia. He has worked with museum-based education and exhibits for over three decades, primarily as a consultant to historic sites and museums. Robert has a doctorate in maritime history from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom, and degrees in anthropology and archaeology from the University of Arizona.

This is a presentation that you will not want to miss.

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION FEATURES BRYN MAWR POLO FIELD EVENTS -- By Kathy Case and Richard Kerr

Thundering hooves, the strike of polo mallet on ball, cheers as a splendid horse clears a high hurdle, and the baying of hunting hounds are sounds not heard in Haverford Township these days. Yet from 1900 to 1947, such sounds were common in the northern corner of the township known as the Polo Field. Here the Bryn Mawr Polo Club, Bryn Mawr Horse Show, Bryn Mawr Hound Show and, briefly, the Bryn Mawr Guernsey Cattle Show drew members of high society from all over the country.

This little-known history of the Polo Field is the center of a new collection at the Historical Society. Award ribbons and medals, photos, show programs, trophies and other memorabilia from the polo club and the shows tell a story of an era when horses shifted from a transportation necessity to a luxury.

It all started in 1892 when A. J. Drexel's son, George W. Childs Drexel, who lived at "Wootton" (now the St. Aloysius Academy), acquired about 26 acres in Bryn Mawr from the estate of railroad executive Samuel A. Black. In addition to being publisher of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, George Drexel was a horse owner and breeder. In 1898 Drexel and others chartered **The Bryn Mawr Polo Club**. By 1899 Samuel Garrigues had surveyed the land for Drexel, and a field of about 18 acres was set aside for polo, with the other land to be developed. The first matches were played on the field in 1900, the last in 1935. In spite of this short span, the field has been known as the Polo Field for the last 120 years.

Horace Laffaye's *Polo in the United States: A History* notes, "... the green shirts of Bryn Mawr remained the most powerful force in Pennsylvania polo," gaining six junior championships between 1905 and 1920 and winning the 1912 U.S. open, and a senior championship in 1914.

According to the 1917 *Horse Show Chronicle*, Bryn Mawr was known as "one of the hotbeds of horse breeding and fox hunting of the East." A group of equestrians, including members of the Polo Club, formed **The Bryn Mawr Horse Show Association** in 1895. The show was first held on the grounds of the Bryn Mawr Hotel on September 19-20, 1895, making it a year older than the Devon horse show. In 1914 the show moved to the Polo Field in Haverford Township, its most enduring home, when the hotel came under the control of The Baldwin School.

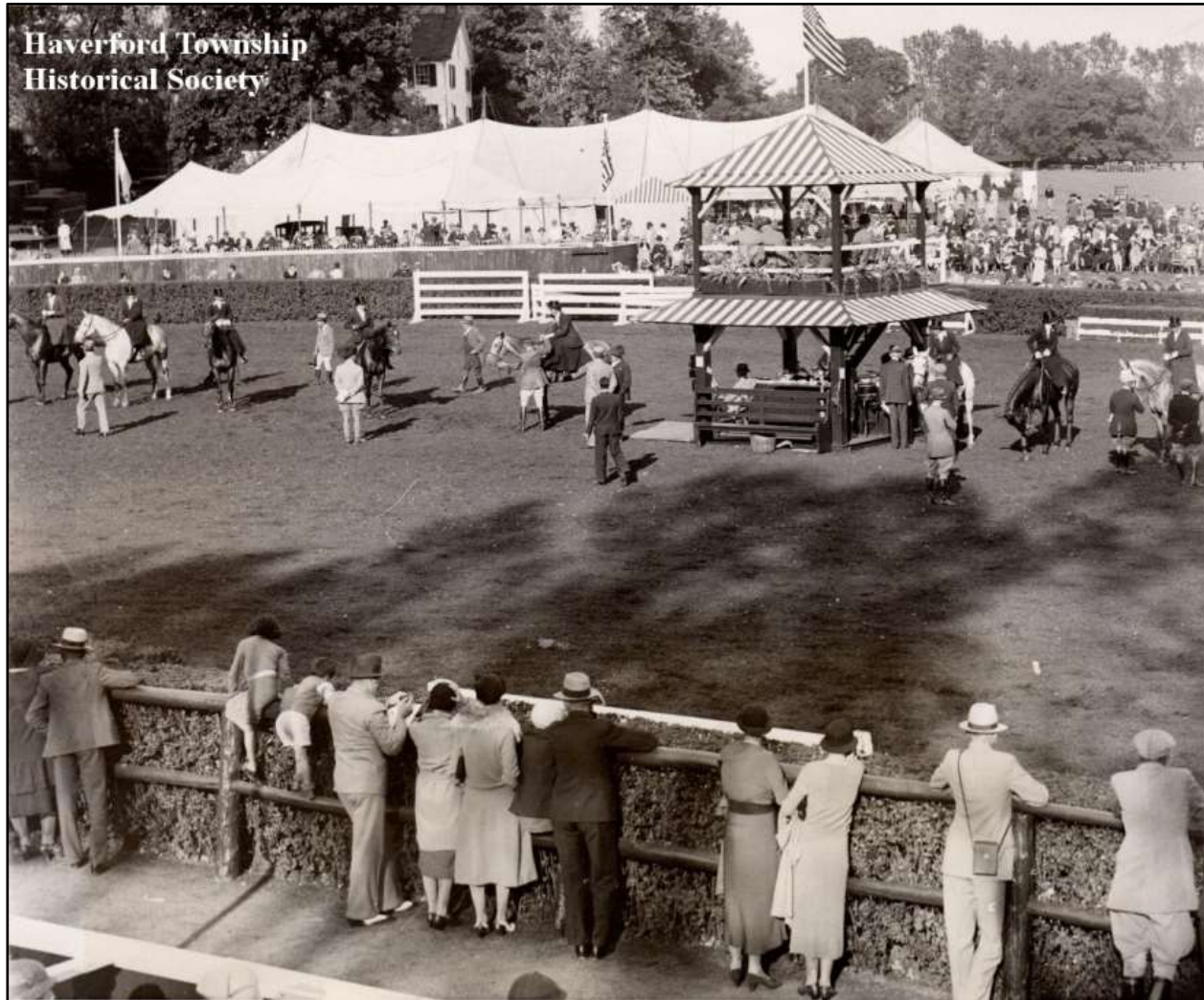
Much press attention was given to the presence and attire of the gentrified attendees, often more than was given to the horses. Proceeds from the annual fall event went to a mix of different medical and charitable groups over the years. (By contrast, the Devon shows have been for the exclusive benefit of Bryn Mawr Hospital.)

Bryn Mawr Horse Shows were not held in 1917-18 and 1941-45 because of the wars, with the last show at the Polo Field held September 25-27, 1947. From 1948 to 1953, the Bryn Mawr show teamed up with the Chester County Horse Show and then disappeared.

To accommodate polo games and the horse and hound shows in one field, a ring, sometimes called the "tanbark oval," with grandstands and a judging pavilion, was constructed at the edge of the Polo Field near Railroad Avenue. There was also a wood platform by the driveway used for hound judging, and rows of horse stables were built near Dayton Road and Penn Street. An old farm house that dated back to at least 1848 was altered to serve as the club house. All of these structures have been torn down.

Local sportsmen John R. Valentine and J. Stanley Reeve of Haverford Township, among others, started **The Bryn Mawr Hound Show** in 1914. It was held in conjunction with the annual horse shows, under the auspices of the Masters of Foxhounds Association of America and the American Foxhound Club. This event proved more enduring than either the polo or horse show. The 1915 horse show introduced whippet races; however, the hound shows featured beagles plus a variety of other hunting breeds. All were classified as hunting dogs (foxhounds).

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*View from the grandstands of the show oval and judges stand at the Bryn Mawr Horse Show, at the Polo Field in Haverford Township, September 29, 1932.*

Hound shows were held at the Polo Field in 1915-16, 1918-40, and 1946-47. The hound show moved to Rose Tree Hunt Club from 1948 through 1955, and in 1956 to Radnor Hunt Club, where it is still held and still called The Bryn Mawr Hound Show.

By 1931 a **Bryn Mawr Guernsey Cattle Show** was being held in conjunction with the Bryn Mawr Horse Show. The cattle show was discontinued after 1935.

By the time the U.S. entered World War II in 1941, the Polo Club no longer existed, the Horse Show and the Hound Show were suspended, and the mortgages and taxes on the land had become seriously in arrears. Investment banker H. Gates Lloyd, Jr., who lived at "Linden" on Darby Road (now the Quadrangle office), had been voluntarily working to clear up the property situation for the Haverford Township commissioners since about 1939, paying off the debts himself.

The Bryn Mawr Playfield Association was incorporated in 1944, following Lloyd's plan, and technically still governs the use of the field. Haverford Township holds the deed to the land, but both Lower Merion and Haverford townships use the field and share the maintenance and scheduling duties.

Explore the HTHS collection for the Polo Field and its events. Go to [haverfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org), place your pointer over **Resources** in the top menu, click on **Searchable Gallery**, then **Keyword Search** and search on "**horse show**".



## THE 2019 HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR IS ON SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8



Haverford Township Historical Society's twelfth annual Holiday House Tour is scheduled for Sunday, December 8th from 1-4 PM. This popular fundraiser for the society and its work has been a great success in past years. Terri Dougherty is once again busily lining up an interesting and diverse group of houses in Haverford Township, including Tudor, Colonial and Bungalow, to take part in this year's tour.

Please call Terri Dougherty for ticket information or questions at 610-449-1571 or email at terridesign88@yahoo.com.

Mark your calendars for this great holiday event! Let's all enjoy the holiday season.

Tour Start locations have not yet been determined, but you will be able to purchase a ticket the day of the tour, as in previous years. You can pay in cash or by check. Tickets can also be purchased online beginning in early October. Tickets are \$25.

Go to our website for more information and find out how to get tickets.

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## NEWS AND NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT — by Terri Dougherty

As the new president of the historical society, I would like to take this time to update our members on the recent renovations that have occurred at Nitre Hall. An all-new electrical service system has been completed, including a new emergency exit lighting system and new alarm system. Following this and the renovation of the old caretaker's bedroom and bath into a functional office and staff bathroom, we are presently moving forward with renovation and enlargement of the public restroom. We will then move on to restoring the original kitchen and renovating the so-called "modern" kitchen. This will enable us to better meet the requirements for the Colonial Living Program for the township's 5th graders, and to host more events on-site in the future.



*Jeff Wolfe making a new V-shaped wooden gutter for the rear of the Federal School.*

I would like to thank the volunteers and other workers and donors who erected the beautiful new, but rustic, "Rogers Storehouse" shed behind the Summer Kitchen. This will provide much needed storage space and end the possibility of damaging Nitre Hall's interior when moving Heritage Festival and other materials into and out of storage.

The Federal School is scheduled to have moisture issues addressed and repair of several windows. We are working with the township, owners of the historic 1797 one-room schoolhouse, on the drainage and moisture issues. Rotting window frames will be replaced, other frames and sash will be repaired, and new shutters, already on hand, will be hung. All of these are in-kind replacements.

As always, your membership dues and generous donations help to make these projects possible. Thank you! - Terri Dougherty

## EXPLORE OUR ONLINE COLLECTIONS

We've been busy this summer, editing and expanding the online access to items in our historical collections. If you haven't taken a look recently, you owe it to yourself to do so. At this time, we have online almost 3,000 items, of which over 2,000 have images associated with them. To see them, go to our webpage at [haverfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org), then place your pointer over **Resources** in the top menu, and click on **Searchable Gallery**.

The museum software that we use (PastPerfect) organizes items into four "catalogs": **Archives** (we now have 290 paper items online), **Photos** (1,395 photos), **Libraries** (384 book listings) and **Objects** (843 items). You can click on **Keyword Search** to investigate across all four catalogs, or click on one of these particular catalog names. Either way, enter a search term, or don't enter a term if you'd like to scroll through all of the contents in a catalog. Check off **Items with Images Only** if that's your preference. If you want to just trust in serendipity, click on **Random Images** and then click on any displayed thumbnail images that catch your eye. As you can see, searching is very flexible.

When the search results pop up, click on any item to see its specific item page with details about the item. If there's an image or multiple images on the item's page, click on an image and a larger version of it will pop up.

Here are a few tips on searching. First, searching on **fire house** will give you all results with **fire** plus all results with **house**. That's probably not what you intended, so use quotes around multi-word searches ("**fire house**") for terms with adjacent words in a particular order. For multi-word searches where the words may not be adjacent or in a certain order, use "logic" words like "and" and "or" between words (**fire and truck or engine**). Another tip: Generally, don't search on plural words like **paintings** or **purses**; instead use singular words like **painting** or **purse**. Experiment with some searches, and you will get the hang of it.

Some productive **Keyword** searches include **house**, **eckfeldt** (the man who documented the Powder Mill Valley), **trolley**, **businesses** (part of a collection name), **nitre hall**, **watts** (early realtor who sold many Brookline lots), **atwater kent**, **horse show**, **jimmie dykes** (baseball player), **golf** and **allgates**.

Here are a few interesting searches in the **Objects** catalog: **milk bottle**, **art and drawing**, **art and painting** (we have quite an art collection, mostly Haverford Township scenes by artists who lived locally), **postcard**, **furniture**, **purse**, **quilt** and **textile**.

As our website advises, the online contents are a "work in progress." We are still correcting, editing and adding items and images associated with them. This is a laborious process that requires many unseen details behind the scenes, but we believe it is worth it, to make our holdings more accessible to the public. Not every online listing is perfect yet, and what is presented is far from including all the items we have in our various collections. Keep checking back on our website in the future, and enjoy exploring Haverford Township's history from wherever you want.



## HTHS ADDS A POSTCARD COLLECTION — by Richard Kerr

Going through the holdings of the Haverford Township Historical Society in recent years, I was surprised by the fact that there were less than a half-dozen vintage picture postcards scattered among its collections. Not only do these old postcards provide a pictorial view of places and times past, sometimes colorized and sometimes dated by style or helpful postmark, but they in themselves are tangible, physical artifacts from the past. Some were true photographic prints, while others were produced on printing presses. In an era before cameras were affordable and available for the general public, picture "penny postcards" were largely the only means for most people to gather and have images of local or distant places. Postcard collecting was a very popular pastime in those days, with messages often revealing that friends and relatives mailed them just so the recipient could add them to his or her collection.

At our April 2015 HTHS Annual Meeting, Delaware County history expert Keith Lockhart and I gave a presentation on "Haverford Township as Seen in Old Postcards." We used postcards from Keith's amazing lifetime collection and my Haverford-specific knowledge. One attendee said before the meeting started that she couldn't imagine that anyone had ever printed any postcards of Haverford Township ("It's not like it's Independence Hall or something..."), but Keith and I showed over 100 of them that night.



*Today's Union United Methodist Church is an expansion of the original building shown in this postcard view.*

This summer I donated to HTHS my collection of Haverford Township related postcards. They have been accessioned, scanned and added to our collection management software. We now have a fine collection of postcards, and over 130 of them are available for online viewing. To see them, go to [haverfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org), place your pointer over **Resources** in the top menu, click on **Searchable Gallery**, then **Objects** and search on **postcard**. Amazingly, we even have three printing blocks, used back in the heyday by the World Post Card Co. of Philadelphia to print postcards of views on Haverford College, our township's principal subject for picture postcards.



From the HTHS Collection:

## MANOA SHOPPING CENTER GROUNDBREAKING SHOVEL

In our collection management software records, there was an entry for “shovel.” Some burrowing around in the dark and crowded recesses of the Nitre Hall attic uncovered it. While a pretty ordinary shovel, the kind with a short handle topped with a D-shaped handle, it revealed itself to be a special and unique artifact from Haverford Township’s history. With silvery plating and an engraved plaque on the top handle, it is the ceremonial shovel used for the groundbreaking event for the Manoa Shopping Center in 1948. It was presented to Oliver Higgins, president of the township’s board of commissioners at the time.

It’s now cleaned up and wears an Object ID tag. Close examination with a magnifying glass uncovered an error in its engraved plaque, which reads “Shipping” instead of “Shopping!” We think that only adds to its story.

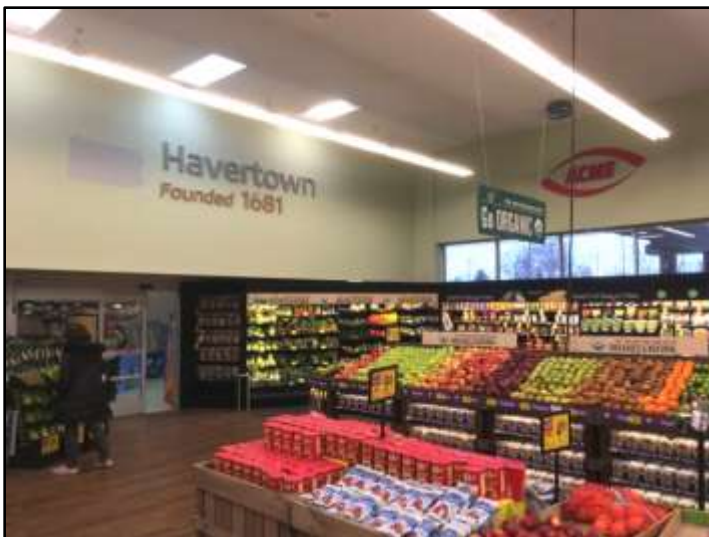
(For more details, go to [haverfordhistoricalsociety.org](http://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org), place your pointer over **Resources** in the top menu, click on **Searchable Gallery**, then **Objects** and search on *shovel*.)



## ANSWER: WHAT’S WRONG IN THIS PHOTO? (from the Spring 2019 issue)

Here’s the answer to last issue’s History Pop Quiz. “Havertown – Founded 1681” at the Acme has two issues:

1. “Founded 1681.” King Charles II of Great Britain established the Pennsylvania colony in 1681 by a land grant making William Penn “Proprietor.” Penn established the first counties (Bucks, Philadelphia and Chester) in 1682, as well as the first “townships” in them, including Haverford Township in Chester County.



2. “Havertown” was never “founded.” While Haverford Township was established as a legal governmental entity, “Havertown” is just the name of a U. S. post office and its service area. The name “Havertown,” a replacement name for the “Llanerch Branch, Upper Darby” post office, was dreamed up by the U. S. Post Office Department in the latter part of 1945 and became effective on January 1, 1946. Post office names and service areas often pay little heed to municipal names and boundaries. Haverford Township residents are served by six different post offices: Ardmore, Bryn Mawr, Drexel Hill, Haverford, Havertown and Wynnewood. (Little known fact: The “Havertown” postal service area also includes small parts of Lower Merion and Upper Darby townships.)

To summarize, Haverford Township was established in 1682. “Havertown” was never founded, and certainly not in the 1600’s.

## HEAD INTO 2020 AS AN HTHS MEMBER OR DONOR!

It's now time to renew (or join) the Haverford Township Historical Society for 2020. A renewal form and addressed envelope are included with this issue for your convenience, or you can do everything online on our website. Those who join now will become members at once, receiving the remainder of 2019 free, on top of being members through 2020. As you may know, we are a non-profit depending entirely on members, donors and volunteers. While we are housed in historic buildings owned by Haverford Township and bring them to life (and ourselves contribute to their care and costs), no township funds enter our organization's budget. Please join us and support our work in 2020 and beyond!

Check your mailing label to determine your HTHS membership or financial donation status. Here are the codes:

- Ixx **Individual** member and 2-digit year for which dues were paid (\$15)
- Hxx **Household** member and 2-digit year for which dues were paid (\$25)
- Dxx **Donor** and 2-digit year of most recent general donation
- Nxx **Nitre Club** donor and 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$25)
- Lxx **Lawrence Club** donor and 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$50)
- Fxx **Federal Club** donor and 2-digit year of most recent donation (\$100)
- COMPL. **Complimentary** newsletter (other history groups and some officials)

Sample label:

John & Jane Doe H18D17  
123 Main Street  
Havertown, PA 19083

Only I19 and H19 memberships have paid 2019 dues. **Renew for 2020!** We need you! (Check to "HTHS" or Paypal on our website)

### Find Us Online!

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Send your comments and suggestions for this newsletter to us via email:  
[info@haverfordhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@haverfordhistoricalsociety.org)  
Editor Fall 2019 – Richard Kerr



### HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

80 YEARS OF SERVICE  
(1939-2019)

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