



# Haverford Township Historical Society

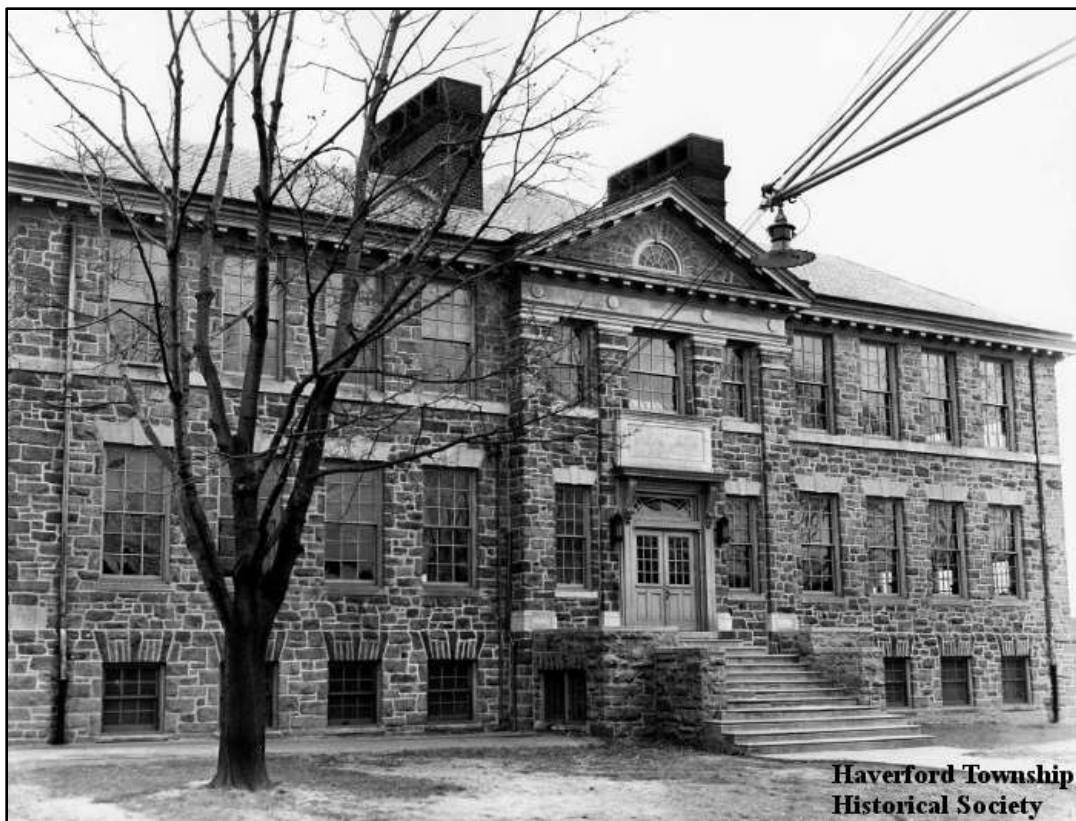


## THE STRANGE HISTORY OF PRESTON FIELD IN HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP

By Kathy Case

Names in the Brynford neighborhood of Haverford Township are pretty simple: County Line because it is; Railroad because there was one there; Martin because the family owned part of the area; Preston because Albert Preston owned a farm. In 1865, Preston (who lived in Lower Merion) sold about 11 acres to Samuel A. Black and disappeared from the township records. The Preston name stuck – for the road, the development, several buildings, and eventually the playing field.

The 6-acre Preston Field you see today got pieced together in ways strange even for Haverford Township. A Quaker organization known as the Preston Reading Room Association built a facility in 1891 on the northeast corner of Railroad Avenue and Buck Lane. Eventually called the Haverford or Bryn Mawr or Preston Community Center, instead of the Preston Reading Room, the center expanded to have a playground covering two separate parcels of land along Railroad Avenue. The center could no longer support the playground, so in 1921 the township started providing funds and eventually acquired the playground. The Preston School had been built on Martin Avenue in 1913. It replaced an earlier Haverford Public School No. 5 on Buck Lane, a building now part of the Memorial Church of God.



*The Preston School - year unknown*

The new school used parts of the playground, but there were parcels of private land within the field. In 1938, Richard Lloyd (the brother of H. Gates Lloyd, Jr., who made the privately-owned Polo Field available perpetually for recreation) bought the Preston private land parcels and donated the now-whole playground to the township. It languished for several years.

The Preston Reading Room building was demolished in about 1957; the steps leading to it can still be seen near the Buck Lane sidewalk. In 1958, Coopertown Elementary School was built and some of the Preston students went there; the rest transferred later and the school was closed. The Preston School building was demolished in 1972. All of the land, once six distinct parcels, became Preston Park, later re-named Preston Field by the township.

*[This article originally appeared on the Brynford Civic Association website.]*

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