

Lower Makefield Township Historical Commission

2025 Accomplishments

In January 2025, the Lower Makefield Township Historical Commission established goals and objectives to support its founding resolution.

RESOLUTION NO. 323 (1977) - RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MAKEFIELD, BUCKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, CREATING A HISTORICAL COMMISSION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SURVEYING THE TOWNSHIP TO DESIGNATE STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS WHICH MAY BE OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND TO RECOMMEND TO THE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS THE CREATION OF A ZONING DISTRICT FOR THE PRESERVATION OF HISTORICAL STRUCTURES AND BUILDINGS.

The following report outlines our 2025 goals and objectives, along with the activities performed to support their achievement.

1. Advocate for preservation of township historic resources

- **Create a Township Historic Building Inventory to identify and support structures subject to the demolition ordinance.**

Goal: Completed up to 1900. Using data from the Historic Resource Survey, the Commission approved a list of homes for inclusion in our historic building inventory. Please see the report created by the LMT Staff, which includes all recommendations.

Ongoing: We will add to this inventory if our next round of Historic Resource Survey post-1900 identifies any additional homes. We are also collating information for each historic tax parcel and have completed extensive organization work in our Google Drive and physical archive.

- **Implement grave marker restoration at Slate Hill Cemetery as outlined in the Keystone Preservation Grant.**

Work under the Keystone Preservation Construction Grant was completed on 100 markers in September 2025. We have identified 20 additional markers that need to be fixed, and they will be completed by Summer 2026. Both phases of the project came in below estimates. The project was funded by a \$33,250 Keystone Preservation Construction Grant, with a 50% match from LMT.

- **List Patterson Farm on the National Register of Historic Places.**

Goal: Achieved as we move into 2026. We will review the plan to be submitted to PA SHPO at our January meeting. There will be revisions once it returns from SHPO, but the draft Listing has been completed

- **Support the implementation of the Patterson Farm Master Plan.**

Goal: While that plan has not progressed, the Historical Commission has been supporting Patterson Farm by having Joe work on both Commissions and by our providing some of the research needed for the National Register Application.

2. Curate resources on township history

- **Update the 2007 Historic Resources Survey and store the information in PA SHARE, and apply for another CLG grant to extend the work to consider 20th-century structures.**

Goal: **Achieved.** Grant for the next round is in progress

- **Catalog township-owned materials on township history and historic resources.**

Goal: **Substantial progress has been made.** Dawn, Dom, and Jack, our volunteers, have gone through all the file cabinets of materials, sorted them, and have almost completed numbering them. We just purchased Past Perfect Software, and the next step is to scan materials and enter them into the database. Dawn's work on this has made many additional projects easier, as we now have online access to previously completed documents.

Ongoing: This is a multi-year project, and we have access to the township building for only 4 hours per week. In 2026, we hope to make substantial progress on scanning and entering into Past Perfect. The ultimate goal will be for Past Perfect to be a public-facing asset.

- **Collect and assess data on Slate Hill Cemetery using drones and a Ground Penetrating Radar. Create a Geographic Information System (GIS) map that provides permanent public access to our information on those buried at Slate Hill, including photos of each marker.**

Goal: **Completed.** We had ground-penetrating radar work conducted on Slate Hill in January, using funds raised through past Ghost Tours. During the year, we worked with Sentry Mapping to develop a map that enabled us to identify some of the grave sites we found as matching prior data. Our interactive website is live, and we have uploaded all maps to the Slate Hill Cemetery webpages.

The interactive website is found here

https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/c56d0663a71c4c4a98bac63409a6a76e/page/Page#data_s=id%3AdataSource_30-1981e2a7b61-layer-66%3A182

Ongoing: We continue to work to identify our residents without headstones. We use death certificates, obituaries, and other records to help us establish this.

- **Proposal of a demolition ordinance to preserve historic structures**

Goal: Not met. We are continuing this goal as we believe that to protect historic resources in LMT, we need the tools to do so.

3. Educate on township history and the importance of preservation

- **Organize Slate Hill Cemetery Ghost Tour.**

Goal: Completed. Again, over 300 people attended, and our feedback was amazing. Multiple people told us to increase our price point. We raised \$1700 for our future projects, people learned a lot, and we gained a new volunteer, Liz, who is researching for our QR code project.

- **Add 10 - 15 more entries to the Slate Hill Cemetery Biography Project (with QR codes).**

Goal: Partially met. We decided to focus on the prior year's Ghost Tour Stories for each subsequent QR code project. We added 8 QR codes and now have 24 eternal residents with full stories on the LMT Slate Hill page.

<https://www.lmt.org/government/boards-commissions/historical-commission/slate-hill-cemetery/burials/>

- **Develop a program for America 250**

Goal: Not met and not anticipated to be met. For this project, we do not have the resources to complete it due to our person-power and financial constraints. We will focus the 2026 Ghost Tour on the theme of the cemetery's many years (predating 250). The loss of commission members who could not be replaced also hurt this project.

Additional activities of the Township include:

- In October, an Eagle Scout completed a project to add a path on the segregated side of the cemetery to improve accessibility and safety.
- Open House in May that was attended by over 50 people
- Created a veterans-specific Slate Hill Booklet and tabled at the Veterans Day parade
- Started research on Dark House in 5 Mile woods and got professional validation of its Penn Charter age. This exists as a foundation not an entire house

We are deeply grateful for the continued guidance and support from township management and staff, whose collaboration has been invaluable in achieving these objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Hanville, Chair

Joe Camaratta, Vice Chair

Helen Heinz, Secretary

Tom Argentieri, Member

Monica Hinden, Member

Dave Verdon, Member

Jeffrey Bedser, Member