



LOMBARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT
LOMBARD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

October 14, 2025

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

FROM: George "Ed" Seagraves, LHS Board President and Alison Costanzo, LHS Executive Director

SUBJECT: Actives of Lombard Historical Society which include a review of programs and events.

Action Requested: For information only, no action requested

Overview This late-summer to fall period was busy and energizing for the Society. We wrapped up the concert series, premiered the Lombard documentary with the Chamber, held our biggest late-summer fundraiser, and we have a great slate of fall programs. At the same time, we kept making steady progress on collections rehousing and on partnerships that will shape programming into next year.

PROGRAMS & EVENTS

In August we hosted the world premiere of *Lilacs & Legacy: Welcome Home to Lombard, Illinois* with the Lombard Chamber of Commerce; the screening drew a great crowd and sparked lots of positive conversation about local history. Music on Maple Street finished in early August and continued to bring neighbors together on summer evenings. We experimented with a relaxed "Picnic at the Cemetery" program on August 30 that offered an approachable look at Victorian burial customs, and added an extra Downtown Lombard walking tour to meet demand.

Our fundraiser, the Food Truck Social (September 6, 4–9 PM), was a great success even with cooler temperatures. The day featured live music (Bourbon Aristocracy and Marlon and the Shakes), family-friendly activities such as face painting, bubbles, and a stilt walker, and wonderful food trucks. The event brought in \$11,500 to LHS as part of our fundraising efforts.

The season also included a community-theater collaboration: Mystery on Maple Street, planning was with Eriana from the Kirkwood Players. This was the first time doing this type of event, featuring four performances and clues throughout the museums. The event was well attended and we raised almost \$2000.



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OTHER PROGRAMS

- Music on Maple Street wrapped up in early August and continued to bring neighbors together.
- New things we tried: a Picnic at the Cemetery (Aug. 30) that looked at Victorian burial customs in a relaxed way, and an extra Downtown Lombard walking tour to meet demand.
- Early October featured our Cemetery Walks (Oct. 3–4), and Witches' Night Out is coming later this month with the Junior Women's Club.

EXHIBITIONS & COLLECTIONS CARE

We reworked the Carriage House temporary space to improve storytelling and to add multimedia elements, we opened *Breaking the Mold: Lives Beyond Convention* alongside the Food Truck Social. That exhibition will run until June 6, 2026. At the Sheldon Peck Homestead, *Pioneering Women: The Peck Women and Their Legacy* remains on view through November.

Over the summer interns completed major scanning and textile cataloging work and repacked items into new shelving; they left detailed handoffs so volunteers can continue rehousing efforts, which is especially important now that storage grants have diminished.

MEETINGS & PARTNERSHIPS

LHS continued active collaboration with the Lombard Chamber (documentary partnership), District 44 and area schools (teacher visits and school programming), and the Lombard Park District (summer camps at the Peck Homestead). We are aware of the McKee House Preservation Foundation and other local partners about the McKee House corridor concept.

LHS also continues ongoing work this spring and summer, Dr. Dale F. Simpson Jr. partnered with LHS to lead two intensive sessions for staff and community stakeholders. Staff gained a clearer understanding of Illinois archaeology and how it can inform interpretation of Indigenous histories. Dr. Simpson's also shared the archaeological surveys at Hidden Lake from the early 1980s, which revealed traces of the Mississippian Culture—people who lived here more than 500 years ago during the era of mound builders at Cahokia. That discovery prompted an update to *The Secrets of Hidden Lake* and highlighted the deep Indigenous history of the area.

LHs also revisited our own collections and located five stone points originally found at Commons Park in the 1970s. We are working with Dr. Simpson to identify their type and age; these artifacts offer a tangible link to the people who lived on this land long before Lombard was founded.



LOMBARD HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT LOMBARD HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

VOLUNTEERS & INTERNS

Interns Francesca Parrillo and Audrey Neibel completed a significant body of collections work—photo scanning, textile cataloging, and repacking—and organized newspaper and 3D collections onto new shelving. They also prepared detailed step-by-step instructions so volunteers can pick up where they left off. Volunteer recruitment stayed steady this summer and we are working on securing volunteers to help with educational programs.

STAFF & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff attended regional meetings and conferences through the late summer and early fall. These events have supplied practical ideas for exhibit work, interpretation, and partnership building, and presenting at conferences continues to raise our profile — Alison shared LHS's "Museums on Call" work at AASLH in September.

OTHER TAKEAWAYS:

Leadership workshop reinforced the importance of values and reflection in our work.

- Strong support for Sheldon Peck Homestead as a National Register candidate; time to revisit application ahead of 2026.
- New ideas for enslaved interpretation and immigration/UGRR stories, especially at the Homestead.
- Built connections with Native leaders, supporting our ongoing work with Dale Simpson.
- Freedom Center visit offered possibilities for traveling exhibitions (*Faith and In-Justice*, Emmett Till).

FOR THE COMMISSION'S AWARENESS

We are also moving forward with an application to list the Sheldon Peck Homestead on the National Register of Historic Places. Staff are working to secure letters of support from community partners and plan to send a formal notification letter to the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) before the end of the year. Jean Follet is assisting us with updating and refining the nomination materials to ensure the application is complete and competitive.