



Downingtown Area Historical Society **Hist-O-Gram**

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

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Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the site of this photo will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your identification entries to:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Does anyone else live in a Sears mail order house?

Eileen Moyer recently asked us if there are any Sears, Roebuck and Co. mail order houses in the Downingtown area, besides her home at 218 Whiteland Avenue in the borough.

Check out www.searsarchives.com/homes/images/1927-1932/1928_p3218.jpg, where you'll find an illustration and specs on her Solace model house, as it appeared in a Sears "Modern Home" catalog. The one and one-half story bungalow, which included six rooms and a bath, was priced at \$1,579 some 70 years ago.

Sears was neither the first nor the only company that marketed mail-order houses, selling more than 100,000 of them between 1908 and 1940. Over those years, buyers could choose from 447 styles, ranging from the "elaborate, multi-story Ivanhoe, with its elegant French doors and art glass windows, to the simpler Goldenrod, which served as a quaint, three-room and no-bath cottage for summer vacationers. (An outhouse could be purchased separately for Goldenrod and similar cottage dwellers.)"

Sears provided all the materials and instructions, and for many years the financing. The entire house would arrive by railroad, from pre-cut lumber to carved staircases, down to the nails and varnish.

Those who have information about a Sears mail order house in the Downingtown area should contact us at: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Downingtowntown area news published in October 1945

The **Downingtowntown Woman's Club** celebrated its final payment on the mortgage of the clubhouse on Manor Avenue by burning the note, as 110 members and their guests looked on. The organization was founded in 1914.

About 300 employees of **Collins and Aikman Corp.**, East Brandywine, attended their fifth annual banquet and dance at the Alert Fire Co. in Downingtown. Lincoln McCausland, plant superintendent, presented 10-year service pins to: Sara Baen, Earl Eppehimer, Frank Flynn, Ambrose Fulton, Lake Keifer, Frank Langford, Meredith Lewis, Bertha Mercer, Rufus Pierce, George Stine, Marvin Taylor, and Earl Thorn. Helen Todd received a 20-year pin. Door prize winners were James Houck, Charles Guiney, Clara Cosner and Ann Skiles, who each received enough gabardine cloth to make a suit.

"Sensational" running backs Dick Dague and Ray Barrow led the **DHS football team** to a 20-20 tie in a thrilling game against West Chester High School.

Members of **Boy Scout Troop 10, Marshallton**, who spent a weekend at Camp Horseshoe included: Joseph Nichols, Granville and Vernon Ross, Kenneth Trimble, Robert Martin, William Flinn, Carl Bane, Ronald Yetter, Robert Busby, and Robert Bunting, their leader.

Although contracts for military equipment had vanished, due to the end of World War II, the **Downingtowntown Manufacturing Co.** was seeking four machine designers, eight draftsmen, three erectors, two pattern makers and one moulder.

Youngsters who were first graders at **Indiantowntown School** in Wallace Township included George Miller, Dawn Postles, John Mason, Dorothy Ann Rigg and Jimmie Smith.

Marshallton Hall was the scene of square and modern dancing on Saturday nights. The Colonial Entertainers provided the music and John Kilgore was the figure caller.

Theresa DiBerardinis was named the Harvest Queen at the fourth annual **DHS Farm Show**; sponsored by the Future Farmers of America. Miss DiBerardinis received her crown from Marjorie Windle, queen of the show in 1944. The court included Joan Moore, Virginia Thompson, Nancy Jones, and Dottie Jane McCausland. And Paul Hannum was awarded the show's grand champion for his entry of vegetables and fruit. Other winners were: Norman Detweiler, second; and Harry Nolette, third. The event also included a display by the Future Homemakers of America Club, a concert by the symphonic band, a magic show and a magic show.

Installed as officers of the Downingtown Lodge of the **Order of Odd Fellows** were Creston Shoemaker, noble grand; John Lamping vice grand; Charles Reel, secretary; Paul Blend, warden; and Allen Woodward, past grand.

It was once part of the Underground Railroad



Mary Ann Cardelli is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify the house in last week's "Where and What Is This?" photo, as being located at 341 E. Lancaster Ave. in Downingtown. Currently, it's the office of Anthony Mascherino, CPA. And for many decades, it served as the home and office of Dr. Martin Neff and Dr. Richard Smith.

Built in 1729, by Thomas Moore, who established a water-powered grist mill in 1716, on the site where the McDonald's restaurant is now located in the borough, according to Jane Davidson's History of Downingtown.

The building was part of the Thomas sisters' boarding school, operated from 1837 to 1877 by the daughters of Zebulon Thomas. The school was headquartered across the street, at 330 E. Lancaster Ave., where the Downingtown Library is now located.

Zebulon Thomas, who lived at 341 E. Lancaster Ave., was an agent for the Underground Railroad in the Downingtown area. He created a space on the third floor of 341 E. Lancaster Ave., to hide escaped slaves from bounty hunters.

In the 1940s, the building was occupied by The Tea House restaurant, which was acclaimed for its chicken a la king (chicken, waffles and syrup). In addition to a waffle iron from the restaurant in the Historical Society's archives, our archival collection also includes a Tea House menu, noting that a full-course chicken a la king dinner was priced at \$1.75.

Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

DHS Alumni Assn. banquet

The banquet will be held from 5-10 PM **Saturday, April 20** at Whitford Country Club. The honored guest is Ron Ditzler, former choir director from 1969 to 1977. More information can be found on the website: www.downingtowntownalumni.org.

Prescription Drug Take Back Day

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has scheduled another National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, which will take place from 10 AM to 2 PM on **Saturday, April 27**, at the Downingtown Borough Hall Annex Building, 4 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. This is an opportunity for those who missed the previous events, or who have subsequently accumulated unwanted, unused and expired prescription drugs, to safely dispose of those medications.

In the five previous Take-Back events, the DEA, in conjunction with its state, local, and tribal law enforcement partners, have collected more than 2 million pounds (1,018 tons) of prescription medications that were removed from circulation.

The National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day aims to provide a safe, convenient, and responsible means of disposal, while also educating the general public about the potential for abuse of these medications. For more info, call 610-269-0344, ext. 200 or visit the Borough website at www.downingtowntown.org.

DHS West Post Prom Party

The 10th annual DHS West Post Prom Party will be held at the Lionville YMCA. All seniors are invited, and they don't have to go to the Prom to come to the party.

This year's theme is "Passport to the World." The YMCA will be transformed into a night filled with fun and activities, including the indoor pool, using exciting places to tour throughout the world, while providing a safe and fun environment for all. Last year's event drew over 250 seniors and their guests.

The event is coordinated and funded by parents and members of the community. All funds that are raised will be used for the event and are utilized in securing activities, games, food and prizes.

Volunteers are needed for all committees, and parents of students in all grade levels are encouraged to get involved. Please do not wait until your child is a senior to get involved.

Those who wish to help are invited to join us at 7 PM at meetings being held in Room 139 at DHS West on **April 16** and **May 14**.

Please check out the P3 website: www.dwestpostprom.com for more details and to sign up as a volunteer.

Savings opportunities available at DARC

Discount Movie Tickets: \$7.50, cash only. Honored at all Regal Entertainment Group locations (Regal Cinemas, United Artists Theatres, and Edwards Theatres). Valid for all show times. There may be a \$2.50 surcharge for the first 12 days of select films or a \$2.50 surcharge for IMAX Giant Screen Theatres.

For more info/complete price list on these opportunities and upcoming programs, go to the DARC website www.darcinfo.com, or call 610-269-9260, or stop by the DARC Office (8:30 AM-4:30 PM, Monday thru Friday), 114 Bell Tavern Road Downingtown.

Banquet Room for Rent

The Downingtown (Williamson) Masonic Lodge, a non-profit organization located at 210 Manor Ave. has a Banquet Room for rent. The area is perfect for parties of up to 80 people and has a full kitchen. Rental fees are very reasonable. Call 610-269-3555 for more information.

Joseph's People, Downingtown Chapter

An ecumenical support mission to help un/underemployed people; run entirely by volunteers. We have been at St. Joseph's since 1995. Meets 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tues. of the month. All are welcome. Visit web page, www.josephspeople.org or just come to a meeting at St. Joseph's Parish Meeting Room behind the school, 460 Manor Ave., Downingtown. Call 610 873-7117. Leave Message. Leader: Cheryl Spaulding, Email: JPCheryl@verizon.net.

Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. If you want to make a comment, add your email address to the sign-up box on the home page of our website. We won't share or sell any email addresses. Or if you want your email address deleted from the list, send an email to:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.