



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

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Where and What Is This?



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

Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

School changes dominated area news 52 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local papers in September 1961

Consolidation of school districts, as mandated by the State Department of Public Instruction, continued. Stanley Landis of Downingtown, who was assistant superintendent of schools in Chester County, said the **new school reorganization law** would result in the 64 school districts (primarily limited to elementary schools in rural townships) in the county would be reduced to just 11 districts by 1965.

That's one of the reasons why the **West Pikeland School Board** reported that it had entered into a jointure agreement with East Brandywine, Wallace and Upper Uwchlan Townships, with hopes that West Pikeland students in grades one through six all would be in schools in the Pickering-Brandywine Jointure within two years. Members of the West Pikeland School Board included Elwood Loughlin, president; Lois Hand, vice president; Fred Cage, secretary; Nevin Myer, treasurer; and Edith Dilworth.

And members of the new **Pickering-Brandywine Jointure** were Glen Wagner, president; Edwin Kalemjian, vice president; Robert Mason, secretary; and Robert Gabriel, treasurer.

All elementary pupils from East Brandywine and Wallace Townships, plus fifth and sixth graders from Upper Uwchlan, entered the **new Brandywine-Wallace School** building in September. Walter Hessinger was the principal. Members of the school's faculty were Miriam Bond, Mary Bennetch, Marguerite Buemer, Marie Inslee, Freda Johnson, Pearl Ferguson, Hannah Harper, Margaret McClintock and Alice Souden.

Downingtown school students took home information on proposed **adult night school** classes. Courses planned over 10-weeks included typing, bookkeeping, woodwork, metalwork, beginning French, drafting, graphic arts, ceramics, fitness for women, dancing, auto repair, modern literature and basic electronics.

For the first time, East Ward, West Ward, Marshallton and Lionville Schools—all part of the Downingtown Area Joint Elementary School System—each had a **central library**.

Officers of the **Downingtown Friends School Parents Group** were Mrs. Fred Wooten, president; Mrs. William Goessel, vice president; Mrs. Warren Radcliffe, recording secretary; Mrs. Campbell Sullivan, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Paul McVickar, treasurer.

Winners of bicycles for winning their divisions in the **Back-To-School Parade**, sponsored by the Downingtown Chamber of Commerce, were Cecelia Tremul, bike division, and Janis Mento, costume division.

Teachers at the **Marshallton School** included Lois Adams, Elizabeth McIntyre, Virginia Wickersham, Thelma Greenwood, Marguerite Ludwick and Henrietta Hagel.

Cynthia Myer and Marie Miller were treated by Dr. L.B. Hayes after they were injured when the **school bus**, in which they were traveling from Downingtown Junior-Senior High School to their Chester Springs homes, crashed into a tree on Route 113 after a tire blew out.

Other local news items

Officers of the Fellowship Class at **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Quayle Barber, president; Paul McCombs, vice president; Mrs., Thomas Stoner, secretary; and Mrs. Glenn Echoff, treasurer. The committee responsible for the landscaping in the front of the church included Gordon Hickman, Francis Swisher and Lambert McGuckin.

Appointed committee chairmen of the **Pickering Valley Women's Club of Upper Uwchlan** were Mrs. Frank Gottier, membership; Mrs. Wilbur McQueen, sunshine; Mrs. Robert Fetters and Mrs. Kenneth Wheatley, cakes; Mrs. Jacob Dewees, welfare; Mrs. Paul McCardell, Lena Frame and Mrs. Jonathan Styer, telephone.

New members of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** were Mrs. Harry Foster, Mary Jean Lillard, Linda Benson, Mrs. Owen Story, Mrs. Vernon Gay, Mrs. Jean Reigel, Patricia Shaw and Mrs. Robert Sommer. Resignations were submitted by Mrs. Joan Hamilton, Mrs. Joan Murphy and Mrs. Faye Whiteman.

Mrs. Ross Dague, Mrs. Benjamin Summers and Mrs. Edward Robinson received awards for their high scores while competing for the shuffleboard team of the **Downingtown Women of the Moose**.

Downingtown funeral director Edward Towson was appointed to the **Borough Council**, replacing Robert Plan, and Jay Lammey of Downingtown National Bank was named to the Police Pension Fund Board.

St. Anthony's Lodge in Downingtown was charging \$2.25 per person for full-course dinners.

Although DHS was the smallest high school in the Ches-Mont League, with a total of just 248 boys enrolled in grades 10, 11 and 12, there were pre-season expectations that head coach Ray DiSerafino's 43-man **football team** would do well.

The Whippets substantiated that optimism when they **beat West Chester Henderson** 9-0 in their opener. The game was at a scoreless stalemate until the third period, when Walt Horsey tackled a Henderson back in the end zone. Then, before he succumbed to the 90-degree temperature with cramps in his legs, quarterback Jim Price put the Whippets in a scoring position when he sprinted to the 20-yard line in the fourth quarter. Gene Williams, backup signal-caller, ran for the TD that sewed up a victory.

What singer once lived in this house?

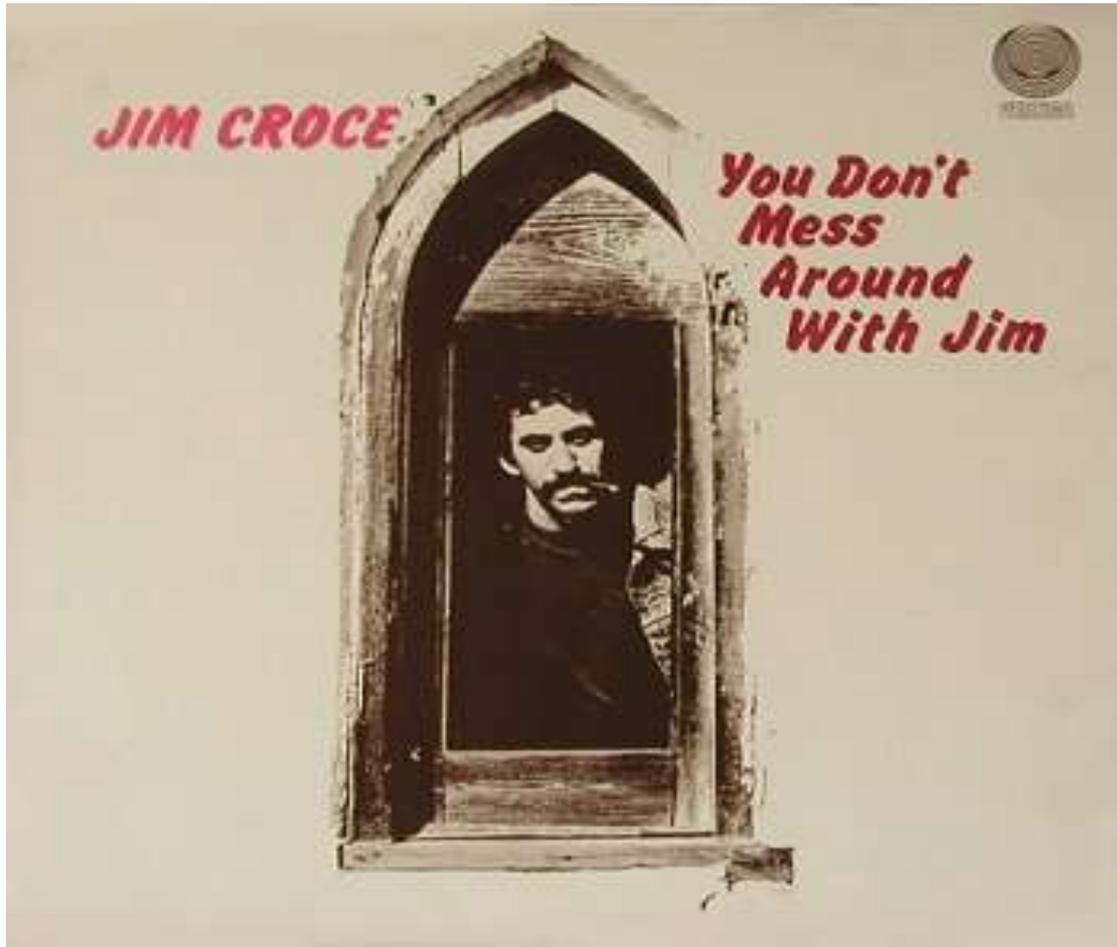


Russell Faller is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the house in the **What & Where Is This** photo (taken by Mike Dunn), published in last week's Hist-O-Gram, as the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Crossan, of 11 Highspire Road in the Lyndell section of East Brandywine Township. Information on Mr. Crossan's cabinetmaking business can be found at: <http://www.lwcrossan.com>.

Many of our subscribers may be interested to learn that the house had once been divided into three apartments, and one of the tenants in the early 1970s was Jim Croce and his family, when he was still a struggling songwriter and singer.

Noted below are the two articles about Croce's life in Lyndell, which were published in the September 28, 2011 and November 4, 2011 editions, respectively, of the Hist-O-Gram.

When Jim Croce lived in little Lyndell



Cover of Jim Croce's biggest selling album

The photo on the cover of one of his biggest hit albums, shows Croce peering out the gothic-style window of an outhouse on the property where he lived in an apartment in a Victorian-style mansion in Lyndell in the early 1970s.

Born in Philadelphia in 1943 and raised in Upper Darby, Croce learned to play a 12-string guitar while attending Villanova University, where he earned a degree in psychology in 1965. His early musical attempts, including coffeehouse performances and the recording of an album with his wife, Ingrid, proved less than profitable. So to save on living expenses, the Croces moved to Lyndell in 1970. While he lived in the quaint East Brandywine hamlet, Croce worked on construction jobs during the week and performed at all types of musical venues on weekends. He also wrote many of his best-known songs while living in Lyndell.

In addition to the title track, several of those hits--*Operator* and *Bad, Bad Leroy Brown*--were on the *You Don't Mess Around With Jim*, which was released in 1973.

Then, Croce's career skyrocketed. He had several other hit albums and enjoyed nationwide success as a concert and TV performer. Tragically, he died in 1973, when his charter aircraft crashed, following a concert at Northwestern State College in Natchitoches, LA.

More recollections of Jim Croce's years in Lyndell

It's hard to believe that more than 35 years have passed since Jim Croce died in a plane crash on September 20, 1973. Sadly, Croce never realized that many of the sacrifices and struggles during his Lyndell years (1970-73) did not begin to bear fruit on a national stage, until after he died. For it was in Lyndell, where Croce wrote most of the songs on three albums that went gold. Those albums, are: *You Don't Mess Around With Jim*, *Life and Times*, *I Got a Name*, and *Photographs and Memories: Greatest Hits*.

To gain a perspective on Croce's life while he and his wife, Ingrid, lived in Lyndell, in East Brandywine Township, we talked to people knowledgeable about his life in that period. Here are their recollections:

- Patience Kaltenbach DiBerardinis remembers Croce as an “upbeat, charismatic” man, with a “great sense of humor.” Patience's now-deceased parents, John and Ruth Kaltenbach, owned the three-apartment building on Highspire Road where the Croces lived in Lyndell. Now a teacher at Friendship School in the Coatesville District, she says Croce often brought his guitar to her family's nearby home and played Irish ballads. And on one visit to the Kaltenbach home, Croce brought iconic singer-song writer James Taylor along. Patience also revealed that the Croces, had a son, Adrian, when, they moved from their \$100-per-month apartment in Lyndell to another rental property in West Brandywine Township, shortly before Croce's death.
- Carole Leporeti, a tenant in one of the other two adjoining apartments at the time, recalls that she was part of a group of friends who often got together at the Croces' and were asked to pass judgment on the lyrics of many of Croce's future hits. “We'd say ‘yea’ or ‘nay.’” Although he had to work in construction during the day, he often stayed up all night writing those songs, said Leporeti, a former communications and theatre professor at Delaware County Community College at the time. Today, she's a semi-retired resident of Cushing, ME. Croce's career was just beginning to take off when he lived in Lyndell, remembers Leporeti. On weekends, for example, “he opened for Randy Newman at the Main Point in Bryn Mawr, and for Woody Allen at the Valley Forge Music Fair,” said Leporeti, who added that many soon-to-be famous musicians were constant visitors at the Croce's apartment. She also noted that both Jim and Ingrid were “great cooks.” Ingrid's kitchen talents were put to good use after her husband's death, when she opened the highly regarded Croce's Restaurant and Jazz Bar in San Diego's Gaslight District in 1985.
- Arlene Rosato, a West Chester resident who was Croce's first cousin, often visited Ingrid in Lyndell when Jim was on the road doing concerts. Arlene said Jim often played the accordion at the close-knit family's get-togethers, when he was a youngster, growing up in Upper Darby. She has every one of Jim's records, including the album that Ingrid and Jim made when they were starting their professional careers in New York City; it sold only five copies, says Arlene.
- Former Downingtown borough councilman Bob Smith says Croce often stopped in at Bob's Kwik Kook on West Lancaster in the borough, when Smith was a teenage, part-time employee. He says Croce usually spent time there talking about music with the owner, now-deceased Bob Chisolm. Smith remembers that Croce gave Chisolm an autographed copy of his first big album, *You Don't Mess Around with Jim*. Chisolm's widow gave the album to Smith, and he treasures it.

Your friends and family can become Hist-O-Gram subscribers

Tired of forwarding copies of each week's Hist-O-Gram to friends and family? If you want any of them to become a subscriber to our free Hist-O-Grams, tell them to go to our website:

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org, and type their email address into the sign-up box on the home page.

We won't share or sell any email addresses. Or if you want your email address deleted from the list, contact us at: Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

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Free ads for local non-profits

Join Girl Scouts (See corrected email address)

Registration and Information night for new Girl Scouts will be held on Thursday September 12 between 7 PM and 8:30 PM at Downingtown United Methodist Church, 751 East Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. Enter from the back of the building. Girl Scouts is open to all girls ages 5 through 17, or in grades K-12. For more information contact GirlScoutsDtown@verizon.net.

Teri's Run and Twilight Walk

Dedicated to the memory of Teri Valocchi and all those who have lost their battle with Scleroderma, the 12th annual Teri's Run and Twilight Walk will be held Friday, September 6 on Green Street in Downingtown. Times for Chip-Timed Runs & Walk: 6:30 PM, Kids Run; 7 PM, 5K Run and 1.5-Mile Walk.

Registration info: [Online Registration](#) and [Mail-In Form](#). Race Day registration also available.

Pre-registration (posted by 8/24) \$20. Late registration (8/25 and after) \$25. Kids' race (no shirt included) \$5. Technical t-shirts guaranteed for pre-registered runners & walkers.

Packets are available at the Chester County Running Store from Tuesday, Sept. 3 to Thursday, Sept. 5 or at registration tent on Green Street after 5PM on race day.

Race numbers, chips, & T-shirts can be picked up at the Chester County Running Store, 24 South High St., West Chester.

Refreshments will be served after the race. Raffle prizes and age group prizes, donated by local supporters, will be given away during the Awards Ceremony starting by 8PM on Green Street.

Don't miss your chance to be included in the drawing for Four Hall of Fame Phillies Tickets! (All race entries are included in raffle)

All kids participating in the ¼ K & ½ K Kids' Run receive finisher medals!

Downingtown Day

Downingtown Historical & Parks Commission will host the 2nd annual Downingtown Day at Kerr Park on Saturday, September 14 from 9 AM to 6 PM. This free event will feature entertainment,

food, an art/craft show, First Responders ceremony, and live music from Nicole Ehinger and the Chester County Lawmen. For more information, visit www.dtownhpc.org.

Health & Wellness Coordinator

Needed for a busy, non-profit senior adult activity center in Downingtown. Ideal candidate will be a motivated self-starter who enjoys working independently and as a member of a team, and will have a passion for working with the elderly. Candidate will ideally hold certification to instruct group exercise, though training can be provided. Position is part-time (28 hours per week). Position requires round-trip travel to and from Elverson, twice weekly; transportation is required. Salary range is \$12.54 - \$15.35 per hour; commensurate with experience. Interested applicants should submit their resume and salary requirements via email to:

bill.pierce@downingtownsensors.org. No phone inquiries please; EOE.

Lions Club Golf Outing

Downingtown/Lionville Lions Clubs will have a golf outing on Monday, August 19 at the Downingtown Country Club, to raise funds for the Lords Pantry, Downingtown Area Senior Center and The Chester County Association for the Blind. For more information, contact Herb Mays (610-389-3747) or Don Greenleaf (484-354-2273).

Downingtown Farmers Market

The Downingtown Farmers Market at Kerr Park is open from 3-7 PM every Thursday. All of the farmers and food artisans at the market must grow, raise or make what they sell – meriting its classification as a "producer only" market.

Consistent with the market's social mission, food drives will be held periodically to benefit the Lord's Pantry and other organizations in need of food donations. Additionally, market space will be made available to non-profit groups if their mission is similar to that of the market.

There is plenty of parking in the Kerr Park lots, as well as in the Borough Hall parking lot.

Savings opportunities available at DARC

Discount Movie Tickets: \$8, 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.