



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.

Local news in late September 1961

Noted below are news items originally published in local papers during the last week of September 1961.

Wilmer Yocum was honored when **Indiantown School** held its fifth annual reunion in Glenmoore. A life-long resident of Wallace Township, Yocum had been a teacher at Indiantown Elementary School and Wallace High School for many years.

And all five members of **Wallace High School's** Class of 1921 attended the reunion. They were Miriam Davis Samples, Ruth Fisher Feeney, Guy Johnson, Walker Rhodewalt and Ray Sheeler.

One of those who paid tribute to Yocum was B. Reed Henderson, retired principal of West Chester High School and a native of Glenmoore, who attended Indiantown School and Wallace High School.

After he graduated from West Chester State College in 1906, Henderson's first job was as principal of **Lionville High School** in 1906-07, then he spent 1907-08 as principal of Wallace High School, followed by a year (1908-09) as principal of the **Orphans School** in Chester Springs.

West Chester High School was renamed **Henderson High School** in 1962, in recognition of Henderson, who was a member of the high school faculty since 1913 and was principal from 1924 until 1962, when he retired. He died, at age 76, in 1964.

Speaking of West Chester High School, its **football team got burned twice** when the Rams played Downingtown in the Whippets' home opener. In addition to losing the game 9-0, the engine of the school bus transporting the Ram gridders to Downingtown caught fire near the intersection of Sugar's Bridge Road and Route 322. Luckily, a West Bradford Fire Co. happened to be passing by and doused the fire. Subsequently, another West Chester school bus was dispatched to take the team the rest of the way to Downingtown.

And the Whippets won their **second consecutive game**, when they crushed visiting Conshohocken 35-0. Junior quarterback Jim Price tossed three first-half TD passes; two of them were caught by Bill Pollock. Defensive lineman George Jefferies scooped up a Conshy fumble and lumbered for Downingtown's final touchdown.

New officers of the **Uwchlan Grange** were Jonathan Styer, master; Edwin Smedley, overseer; George Taylor, lecturer; Charles Martin, steward; Edith Oberholser, chaplain; Gilbert Smedley, treasurer; Isabel Acker, secretary; and Bessie Smedley, gatekeeper.

And the **Lyndell Grange's** new officers included: Thomas Newlin, master; Joseph Emerson, overseer; Roy Nellius, steward; Mary McCausland, lecturer; Helen Laird, chaplain; Warren Marshall, treasurer; John McCausland, secretary; and Larry Miley, gatekeeper.

Leaders of the **Downingtown/Chester Valley Community Chest** drive were Stanley Walters, Ralph Ralston, Joe Mento, Chandler Cushman, William Roberts and Gordon McGovern.

Ruth Jackson, Rev. Carl Kopenhaver and Dr. Howard Meroney were the candidates for Upper Uwchlan Township's School Board who addressed the **Upper Uwchlan Home and School League**. Another candidate, Leo Hughes, was away on business.

Officers of the **West Pikeland PTA** were Mrs. John Henssler, president; Mrs. Harry Levering, vice president; Mrs. Harley Fink, treasurer; and Mrs. Solomon Fink, secretary.

Reflective of the incoming Baby Boomers and the suburbanization of the Downingtown area, **enrollment figures** for the Downingtown Junior-Senior High School were 489 students at the senior high school and 701 at the junior high school.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry MacNeill of Whitford loaned a **Chippendale-style armchair** to be exhibited on Chester County Day. The chair was constructed by Michael Bouvier, a 19th Century Philadelphia cabinetmaker and great-great grandfather of Jacqueline Kennedy.

Chicken Bar-Be-Ques were conducted by St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lionville, and the Downingtown Optimist Club.

The **DHS Band Fathers** group sponsored afternoon and evening concerts by the U.S. Marine Band in the Junior-Senior High auditorium. Proceeds from the concerts were applied to the purchase of new uniforms.

Downingtown residents who were elected officers of the newly organized **Central Chester County Visiting Nurse Association** were Mrs. Walter Roehrs, president; Mrs. Ralph Ralston, second president; Mrs. Colyer Lewis, recording secretary; and Mrs. William Gibbs, assistant treasurer.

Officers of the new **Brandywine-Wallace School PTA** were Hans Kurash, president; Mrs. Samuel Chalfont, vice president; Mrs. Mae Swarner, secretary, and Mrs. James Feters, treasurer.

A total of 131 people signed up for one of the **Downingtown Area Adult Night School** courses. The highest number of people registered for typing, followed by sewing, bookkeeping and art. Other courses offered were basic electronics, physical fitness for women, auto repair and wood shop.

Have any info or material on the Hancock GAR Post?

We're seeking info and material connected with the Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock Post 255 of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), which was headquartered in Downingtown. The GAR, comprised of Civil War veterans, was comparable to today's American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars.

The Hancock GAR Post was formed after Civil War veterans from the Downingtown area were invited to a meeting held in Central Hall on West Lancaster Ave. in the borough on May 20, 1882, according to Charles Pennypacker's *History of Downingtown*, published in 1909.

(Built in 1860 for the First Presbyterian Church, which soon disbanded, Central Hall was used for traveling shows, wrestling matches, high school commencements, as well as public meetings in the late 19th Century, according to Jane Davidson's *A History of Downingtown*. It's the current site of Messiah Lutheran Church.)

In early June 1882, the following veterans signed on as charter members of the Post: Reese Bailey, J.T. Carpenter, Robert Walker, John Beaver, G.C.M Eicholtz, Liberty Browne, George Anderson, Abner Evans, Sylvester Makens, Elliott Browne, James Gunn, John Knauer, S.B. Evans, James McClintock, Thomas Smith, Judson Armor and Joseph Moore.

Those who joined at the Post's first regular meeting, later in June 1882, included: David Cox, James Morgan, William Mercer, Daniel Daller, James O'Neal, Elwood Lewis, Samuel Lilley and Patrick Gallagher.

The local GAR organization apparently folded in the late 1920s, when the number of surviving Civil War vets had diminished significantly.

Those who can provide information about any members of the Hancock Post are asked to send an email to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

See you at East Brandywine's Community Day

Hope to see you at the Historical Society's booth at East Brandywine's Community Day at the Community Park on Dilworth Road from 2-6 PM Saturday, August 24. Sunday, August 25 is the rain date.

Some of the features will be: a bike parade (registration starts at 1 PM), car show, balloon lift, lots of food, magic show, pony & hay rides, bingo, tow truck display, K9 unit, moonbounce, pickleball, and music by bagpipers and a "mystery guest" band.

Please bring non-perishable food items for the Chester County Food Bank.

The original part of this house was built in 1791



Rahn Brackin is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the house above, which was the **Where & What Is This?** photo (taken by Mike Dunn) in last week's Hist-O-Gram. The address is 1 Old Kings Highway in East Caln. According to Betty Venditta and Hilda Tarlecky, who grew up there, the house had been owned by their father and grandfather, both of whom were dairy farmers named William Hannum. They operated the Sunset View Farm dairy business, which eventually included the property now owned by the Mattioni family on the west side of Uwchlan Avenue in Downingtown. The property on Old Kings Highway was sold to Henry Smith in 1948, according to Betty Venditta.

Your friends and family can be 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.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.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@downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org.

Classified Advertisements

Paid ads for businesses

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Providing a courtesy financial advisory service whose objective is to create a portfolio of:

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Downingtown, PA 19335.

Free ads for local non-profits

Chicken Bar-B-Que

The Alert Fire Co., 122 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, will have its annual Chicken Bar-B-Que fundraiser from 4 PM-7 PM Saturday, August 24. The dinner includes a half chicken, baked potato, corn on the cob, apple sauce, dinner roll and dessert. You can either eat at the firehouse or take out.

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 GirlScoutsDtwn@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@downingtownseniors.org. No phone inquiries please; EOE.

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.