



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 4, No.35

August 29, 2013

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.

Downingtown area news in April 1946

Noted below are items originally published in local newspapers 67 years ago.

Mrs. Gilbert Smedley, education chairman, reported to members of the **Community Club of Uwchlan** that there were 92 one-room schools in Chester County. She also said most of them were poorly heated and drafty, and had an inadequate water supply and lousy toilet facilities.

The **Downingtown Moose Lodge** elected the following officers: Donald Dixon, governor; Harry Hilton, junior governor; Fred Bowers, prelate; Walter Adams, trustee; and Francis Francella, treasurer.

Members of **Cub Pack 52**, Marshallton, who conducted a skit at a monthly meeting included Fred Frame, Harold Trimble, Robert McCue, Albert Miller, Earl Young and Jackie Clouser.

Newly-elected officers of the **Odd Fellows** in Downingtown were John Lamping, grand; Herbert Pritchard, vice grand; Herbert Kreider, warden; Allen Woodward, conductor; Gilbert Cox, chaplain; Owen Pritchard, inside guardian; and Creston Shoemaker, outside guardian.

The **Collins and Aikman** plush mill in the Bondsville section of East Brandywine was seeking young men who were willing to learn to weave.

The Downingtown Branch of the **Chester County Hospital Auxiliary** re-elected these officers: Mrs. Joseph Harvey, president; Mrs. Poyntel Canby, vice president; Mrs. Thomas Parke, second vice president; Mrs. Herbert Ash, secretary; and Mrs. Shartle Brookover, treasurer.

Joseph Sabellico announced the formation of partnership, **Sabellico Brothers Electrical Contracting**, after his brother, Marshall, returned from four years service in the Army.

New officers of the Ladies Working Guild of **Central Presbyterian Church** were Mrs. Clarence Reed, president; Mrs. James Stauffer, first vice president; Mrs. Corbin Hutchison, second vice president; Mrs. Norman Howe, secretary; and Mrs. Joseph Brown, treasurer.

The eight-team **Chester County Baseball League** was organized at a meeting held in the office of Dr. Carl Dent of Downingtown. Dent was elected president of the league.

Entertainment at a meeting of the **Marshallton PTA** was provided by the Marshallton Rythymn Boys—Houston Keenan, Tony Turpin, Artie Summers and Linwood Becker—whose singing was accompanied by Mary Wickersham.

Members of the **Downingtown Woman's Club** elected these officers: Mrs. Frank Lenhardt, president; Mrs. John Fisher, vice president; Mrs. Joseph Harvey, second vice president; Mrs. Frank Smedley, recording secretary; Mrs. Herman Faucett, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. George Foreman, treasurer.

Proceeds from the Hopewell Fellowship Showboat Minstrels, presented in the Odd Fellows Hall in Lionville, went to **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville.

Officers elected to head the Sunday School at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Upper Uwchlan, were Sterling Henry, superintendent; Horace Hause, assistant superintendent; Dorothy Frame, secretary-treasurer; Lena Frame, librarian. Mrs. Walter Garvine retired as secretary-treasurer, after serving in that position for 24 years.

Installed as officers of the **Downingtown VFW** were Henry Thomas, commander; Francis Fennelly, senior vice commander; Frank Nurthern, junior vice commander; John Myer, quartermaster; Charles Snyder, chaplain; James Fennelly, post advocate; and George Hilton, adjutant.

Reactions to last week's Hist-O-Gram

Regarding the story about the Indiantown School reunion in Wallace Township, Glenmoore historian John Miller writes: "You may be surprised to learn there is still an Indiantown School Reunion held each year. This year it will be held at 2 PM on Sunday, Sept 15 at the Glen Moore United Methodist Church. I think the reunion has been held every year since it started. I can only attest to the last 25 + years. Now, most of the attendees are those who attended Indiantown Elementary."

Also retired managers of local municipalities are still sharpies when it comes to details. That's why an email from Ed Hill, East Caln Township's former manager, correctly noted that teams at West Chester Henderson High School are known as the Warriors, and not the Rams (actually West Chester University) as we wrote in last week's article about B. Reed Henderson. Also, most of the details about Henderson's past were provided by Sandy Brannan, archivist for the Wallace Township Historic Commission.

And Don Greenleaf, ex-manager of Downingtown Borough, caught us with a faulty GPS system when we claimed that the Mattioni property is on the west side of Uwchlan Avenue; it's on the east side.

This was the East Downingtown Post Office



Many of our subscribers have heard that Downingtown was the only borough in the U.S. that had two Post Offices. The photo in the old postcard above—provided by Sandra Thompson Carboni, DHS Class of 1962, who lives in Cocoa, FL—shows what the East Downingtown Post Office looked like in the early 20th century, when it was located on East Lancaster Avenue. There have been few changes to the exterior of the building.

Noted below are details, originally published in the Dec. 30, 2011 Hist-O-Gram, on why there were two Post Offices in the borough and how the situation was resolved.

The seeds of discord were planted in the late 1880s, when residents of the borough's East Ward wanted the Post Office to be re-located to their end of town. The borough's sole postal facility had been situated across from the railroad station on West Lancaster Avenue for many years because that location provided easy access to the Pennsylvania Railroad, which carried much of the mail to and from the borough.

The dispute reached a point where Congressman Smedley Darlington tried to settle the problem by convincing the U.S. Postmaster General to have a second postal facilities in March 1890, and the East Downingtown Post Office was established in a building at the intersection of

East Lancaster Avenue and Parke Alley. In the second half of the 20th Century, the building was occupied by McClure's Colonial Bake Shop and Archie Wasson's real estate business.

Fueled by their success on the postal front, the East Enders proposed, later in 1890, that the borough be split in two. The demarcation line between the two new boroughs was to be Brandywine Creek. That plan was shot down by four of the six members on borough council and the burgess (mayor) because the division of the town would have been costly as well as divisive. That decision was supported subsequently by the Court of Chester County.

In the mid-1920s, borough councilmen Allen Keim and Guyon Miller were determined to build a municipal building that would help heal the psychological split in the borough, which had lingered for more than three decades. A Borough Hall also would create a central seat of government in the growing town; the council had been meeting in the Alert fire hall since 1892.

However, a large building project was impossible to undertake at the time because the borough had recently made a commitment to construct a much needed waterworks, with a \$135,000 price tag.

The post office issue finally was resolved in 1925, when members of the Downingtown Business Men's Club, precursor of the Chamber of Commerce, established the Citizens Holding Co., which underwrote construction of the \$43,985 municipal building. The building was erected on a plot of land, purchased for \$700 by borough council, on the south side of Lancaster Avenue, on the edge of the Brandywine.

The plan also included the U.S. Post Office Department's agreement to consolidate the borough's two post offices into one space, which was rented in the new municipal building, at \$1,800 annually, for 10 years. To sweeten the deal, federal postal officials also agreed to provide delivery to all borough residences and businesses at no extra cost.

Although the new Borough Hall didn't settle all the East Ward versus West Ward tiffs in Downingtown over the coming decades, it's easy to see why Downingtown's leaders had good reason to celebrate on October 7, 1926, when the new municipal building was dedicated.

And when current borough residents hear tales about those battles over the location of the post office in the late 19th Century, they often just shake their heads and smile.

More info about Downingtown's Hancock GAR Post 255

Regarding local Civil War vets who were charter members of the Hancock GAR Post 255, which we included in last week's Host-O-Gram, Caroline Ash wrote from her home in Chicago that Jeremiah Townsley Carpenter was her great grandfather. He was one of the community leaders responsible for building the Opera House on Brandywine Avenue in Downingtown as well as being the town dentist and undertaker at the time. Caroline has a "gruesome" ivory-handled implement that Carpenter used to pull teeth.

He lived in a twin house on Washington Avenue, just east of Chestnut Street, with his wife, Eliza Laird Carpenter and their five children—Horace, Charles, Florence, Mary and Laura—Caroline's grandmother.

However, we haven't received information from Hist-O-Gram subscribers about any of the other local Civil War vets who were charter members of the Hancock Post. Besides J.T. Carpenter, they included: Reese Bailey, 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. We hope some other subscribers will offer some info on them.

We also received an email from Jon McGuckin of Downingtown, who tells us that the Charles F Moran American Legion Post 475, which used to have a home at 338 E. Lancaster Ave. in the borough, had several 1873 Springfield rifles—with “GAR 255” stamped on the stock—and other Civil War guns and swords before the home was sold. The weapons originally had been owned by the Hancock GAR Post 255. We wonder if some of them are still in the Downingtown area?

And speaking of the American Legion home in Downingtown, Bud Koth of East Brandywine, wonders what happened to the stone (about 4 feet high and 3 feet wide) with a plaque on it that was in front of the home. Bud says the plaque had the names of the World War I vets who founded the local Legion post in 1920.

Why was it called Bed Bug Row?



Ben Bruton is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo of the homes on Bondsville Road, East Brandywine Township, where employees of the Bondsville Mill across the street once lived. Originally, the Bondsville operation was water-powered, and was part of a series of mills built along Beaver Creek. It was named for Abraham Bond, who built the mill, which operated for 110 years. It produced everything from woolens in 1841 to linings for U.S. Air Force jackets during World War II. It was known locally as the “Plush Mill” because upholstery fabric was manufactured there for the automobile industry. On the mill site is a War Memorial plaque, erected in 1946, dedicated to the employees of Collins and Aikman Corp. who served in the military during World War II. Collins and Aikman was the last firm to occupy the mill, before it was closed in 1954, and 135 employees lost their jobs. Bruton has a unique connection to the Bondsville Mill, because cleaning up the War Memorial there was his Eagle Scout project in the early 1990's.

Also, we're mystified about why so many responders called the workers' houses “Bed Bug Row.”

Clip Joint will be open Sunday afternoon

Although it happens on Labor Day weekend, we're going to have our leisurely clipping and pasting session from 1-4 PM on Sunday at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available in the lot at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays. You're welcome to arrive and leave at your leisure.

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.

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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 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.