



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 4, No. 50

December 12, 2013

Please support our Preserve and Protect Programs

We're asking subscribers to our free Hist-O-Grams to help us continue to conduct our **Preserve and Protect Programs**. Noted below are reasons why we're soliciting your support.

- **We continue to restore and maintain Ashbridge House**, our 304-year-old headquarters. Major projects we completed this year were repairing a brick stairway, and installing a new window well in the basement.
- **We help local non-profit organizations**. We provide a place for meetings of Downingtown area **Girl Scout** leaders. We also conduct programs so Girls Scouts and Cub Scouts can earn history-related badges. And we did a program for the **Downingtown Woman's Club**. Also, we're going to help the Woman's Club celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2014.
- **We constantly work on our archival collection**. Newspaper articles about local people are clipped and pasted on 14 x 9 cards by volunteers every week. They comprise the Family Files, which now include clippings on more than 8,300 people. Also, we continue to add to our on-line index, noting all the names in the Family Files, which are listed on our website. And we continue to clip and paste articles about local governments, businesses, schools, churches, clubs and teams.

To help us continue to conduct these programs next year, we need you're your help. Please send a tax-deductible donation to the Downingtown Area Historical Society.

Kindly make out your check to the DAHS and send it to: P. O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335. If you have any questions, please call 610-269-1709 or contact us via info@Downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org. Thank you for your continued support.

A great Christmas gift: A Historical Society membership

Can't figure what to give someone for Christmas? How about a gift membership in the Downingtown Area Historical Society? Just complete the membership form, which can be accessed via: www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org/2012MembershipForm.pdf.

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.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.

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the building, shown above, will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org.

Local news published in January 1962

Noted below are Downingtown area news items originally published more than 50 years ago.

DHS was the first high school in the area to start teaching students how to use IBM's new **Selectric typewriter**.

Six **Boy Scouts** from Troop 82, sponsored by Messiah Lutheran Church, Downingtown, qualified to participate in a Chester County Council First Aid Meet. They were Philip Barlow, George Bowman, Morris Farnum, Robert Pomento, Fred Pollock and David Robbins.

Members of the cast in a Christmas play presented at **Hopewell Methodist Church**, East Brandywine, were Mildred Yost, Linda Lammey, Carol Piersol, Patty Whitely, Jill King, Connie Smedley and Barbara Thompson.

Members of the **Guernsey Calf Club**, who met at the Deets home, were Elaine and Norma Beard, Beverly and Dawn Reese, Carroll DuBosq, Robert Deemer and Tommy Pyle.

Members of the **Downingtowntown Junior High School** boys' basketball team, coached by Milton Lutsey and John Slovinac, were Oscar Asparagus, William Baxter, Paul Bien, Phillip Henry, Stephen Meacham, Patrick Murphy, Robert Poole, Thomas Price, Eugene Prout, Jay Rambo, Kenneth Siegel and Jeffrey Swisher.

Newly elected officers of the **Minquas Fire Co. Auxiliary** were Marie Hamilton, president; Rose Simone, vice president; Helen Dague, recording secretary; Dot Peters, financial secretary; Alice Zittle, trustee; and Edna Pendergrast, chaplain.

The **Downingtown Paper Co.** and the United Papermakers and Paperworkers Union signed a two-year contract, which called for a four cents per hour wage boost, an additional paid holiday, and four weeks' vacation for employees with 25 years' service.

John B. Talierco of Downingtown, a student at Villanova's Law School, received the "Star of Italian Solidarity" decoration from the Italian Consul General in Philadelphia. Talierco, an Air Force helicopter pilot at the time, received the medal for rescuing all of the crew of an Italian tanker, which struck a ridge of reefs near Morocco in 1958.

New members of the **Downingtown Lions Club** were Gene DiSantis, Herbert Lambert, Frank Matulay, Chester Messervy, James Cressmer and Norman Cressmer.

The only two scorers for the **DHS girls' basketball team**, when it lost 46-17 to O.J. Roberts, were Nancy Gindin, nine points, and Gayle Davis, eight points.

Mrs. James Thackeray, postmistress, and her assistant, Mrs. Glenn Plank, cancelled 10,775 pieces of mail between December 13 and 23 at the **Lionville Post Office**. Many of the large packages they handled were mailed by **Worthington Orchards**.

Elmer Schrupf was presented the Citizen of the Year award at the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's** 17th annual banquet, held at the Downingtown Motor Inn. Also receiving special awards for spurring the borough's economy were Samuel Tabas and his sons, Daniel and Charles.

Mrs. Gilbert Hamm was elected president of the Ladies Guild of **Central Presbyterian Church**, Downingtown. Others elected were Mrs. Eugene Pollock, vice president; Mrs. Lillian Dixon, secretary; and Mrs. Joseph Brown, treasurer.

And new officers of the **Alert Fire Co. Auxiliary** were Mrs. Aubrey Dawson, president; Mrs. Anna Hannum, vice president; Mrs. Joseph Brown, recording secretary; Mrs. James Hurtt, financial secretary; and Mrs. Mary Yocum, treasurer.

New members of the **Ladies of St. Joseph's Catholic Church**, Downingtown, were Barbara Sarmiento, Rose Marie Cipollini, Carol Crenshaw and Pat Panichelli.

Anyone have a paper cutter you can donate to us?

Does anyone have a paper cutter they can donate to the Historical Society? The one we've been using to trim the card stock--on which we paste newspaper articles for our Family Files collection--is broken. Since we have to trim 17" X 11" sheets of card stock, we'll need a cutter with an 18" blade. If you wish to donate a cutter, please contact us at Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org. We'll gladly pick it up.

Items from first edition of the “Blue and Gold” newspaper

Among the neat items Rena Francella recently donated to us was a copy of the December 21, 1943 edition of the “Blue and Gold.” Apparently, it was the first edition of a newspaper published by Downingtown Junior-Senior High School students. Mrs. Francella also donated copies of the “Blue and Gold” published in 1944.

Fascinating items found in that first edition show that high school life 70 years ago, during World War II, was far different than it is today. Some of them were:

In the first four months of the 1943-44 school year, the students sold \$7,153.96 (that’s equivalent to more than \$70,000 today) worth of war stamps and bonds. Since the school exceeded its quota, a Minute Men Banner was hung in the auditorium.

About 325 DHS grads were in the military in 1943, and many of them wrote letters to Miss Marian Philips, a revered Problems of Democracy teacher at DHS. Joe Travaglini, a sailor serving at the Great Lakes Naval Station, wrote: “more discipline in high school makes it easier to take orders from officers.” And Leta Tweed, serving as an Army nurse on a hospital ship “somewhere in the Middle East,” wrote, “What I wouldn’t give for a grilled ham sandwich, chocolate milk and a devil’s food cake.” While overseas, Leta contracted malaria and was shipped back to the States to recuperate.

Field hockey was a new sport at DHS that fall. Members of the team were Mary Rafferty, Ada Celi, Jean Esworthy, Antoinette Petrella, Mary Lafiato, Theresa Mascherino, Rose Perduci, Eva Taraschi, Betty Titus, Mildred Wilson, Elizabeth Warren and Janet Knauer.

Members of the newly formed Hillbilly band were: Josiah Ashenfelder, harmonica; Robert Cozzone, drums; William Wagoner, fiddle; Leon McCreary, guitar; Mary Smith, mandolin; and Chester Dowlin, guitar.

The “Blue and Gold” staff included: Mary Jo Barrow, editor-in-chief; Elizabeth Bradley, junior editor; Elvin Welch, art; Sara Harrington and D. Kinzinger, humor; Dorothy Bunker, business manager. Reporters were Hazel Barnes, Esther Beale, Phyllis Booker, Dorothy Brown, Imogene Reeves, Dorothy Butler, Vera DiMarco, Peg Garwood and Peg Pollack. And the business staff included Jean Gray, Lela Pierce, Betty Quay, I.M. Robinson, Marie Stern and Peg Weimer.

Stove Co. once was a hot business here

We became curious when we saw on eBay that someone was trying to sell a cast iron “stamp press,” manufactured by the Rogers Stove Co. of Downingtown in 1884.

Never heard of that company, but Dan Lindley, who usually focuses his attention to people’s grave sites in Chester County cemeteries, came to our rescue when he discovered a lot of information about the firm while doing research at the Chester County Historical Society in West Chester.

Originally known as the Downingtown Stove Works, the private company was established in the borough in 1883. The foundry was located in the building, formerly occupied by the Benner and McLane Sewing Machine Co. And when the company was incorporated as Rogers Stove Co. in 1884, two of the officers—George and Charles Rogers—were Downingtown residents.

The product line wasn’t limited to stoves, for heating as well as cooking, since a news article noted that the company was working on an order for cast iron radiators. Also, the company was shipping a freight car full of its ranges and room stoves to New York City every week, by late 1884, according to an article in the *Daily Local News*.

Although orders from across the country continued to come in, the foundry was shut down by the Chester County sheriff in 1885, apparently due to a lack of operating capital. However, after a committee of local auditors—Joseph H. Johnson, J.H. Wells and Jacob Shelmire—checked the corporation's book, it was decided that after 10 investors each kicked in \$500 each, the company would be on solid financial footing.

Apparently, the infusion of capital didn't work, and the firm's final demise occurred after a fire broke out at the foundry in 1887, per Charles Pennypacker's 1909 *History of Downingtown*.

Now it's an office building on Route 113, Chester Springs



Rahn Brackin is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the building in the photo above, when it was a residence at 501 E. Uwchlan Ave. (Route 113), Chester Springs. In recent years, it was converted into an office building for small businesses, and is part of The Shops at Lionville Station retail center. The photo was provided by Phillip Hemcher, who grew up nearby.

Paid ads for businesses

Vance Usher, Registered Representative

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

1) Investment Grade Bonds - To achieve preservation of principal, and a stream of monthly income, to meet your budgeted living expenses.

2) Equities - To achieve market growth, and increase financial wealth, by exceeding the rate of inflation. Contact: vance_usher@netzero.com, 610-329-1056, 320 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

Free ads for Non-Profits

Downingtown Christmas Parade

The Downingtown Christmas Parade will begin at 3 PM Saturday, December 14. The parade will start in the area of Beaver Creek Elementary School, 601 W. Pennsylvania Avenue and head south on Gable Avenue to Business Rt. 30. The parade will turn left and head east on Rt. 30, continuing to Whiteland Avenue/Rt. 113. (East Ward Elementary School) The parade will turn right onto Whiteland Avenue with the exception of those motorized vehicles that may want to continue down Rt. 30 to head home. All other units must continue down Whiteland Avenue. For more details about the parade, see: www.dtownchristmas.com/ParadeInfo.html

Marshallton House Tour

The Christmas in Marshallton House Tour will be held from 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, December 14. It will feature tours of 21 historic homes decorated for the holiday season and public areas, such as The Bradford Friends Meetinghouse and the Marshallton Inn, both of which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Marshallton, which has been an active village since 1760, is located on Route 162 four miles west of West Chester.

Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 on the day of tour. They can be purchased at Marshallton United Methodist Church on Strasburg Road in the village, or by accessing www.marshalltonchurch.org, or by calling 610-696-5247. Tickets will also be available and delivered upon request through the office of Kit Anstey, Prudential Fox & Roach Realtors, 610-836-2348 or Kit@AnsteyTeam.com. Additional ticket sale locations include Highland Orchard's Farmer's Market and the Holiday Cottage in Marshallton.

In addition to the house tour (no tour ticket required) Marshallton United Methodist Church will host a variety of events, including a luncheon served in Fellowship Hall, live music in the sanctuary, a country store and holiday cookie sale, and a gallery highlighting the work of local artists Dennis Park, David Katz, Sherry McVickar and Leander Fontaine.

Proceeds raised from this event will go to assist Marshallton United Methodist Church and its mission of providing support and resources for local families and community organizations.

Downingtown Winter Market

The Downingtown Winter Market will be at the Williamson Masonic Hall; 210 Manor Ave., Downingtown, from 4 - 6 PM on Thursday, December 5, 12, and 19. There be NO Market on *December 26 or January 2*. 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.

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