



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 building, shown above, will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Better yet, they will win a \$25 gift card from F.H. Swisher Plumbing & Heating, to be used at a local restaurant.

Please send your responses to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

What was happening here 36 years ago?

The following news items were originally published in local newspapers in June 1977.

The Downingtown Area School Board adopted a **\$12.1 million budget** for the 1977-78 school year.

The **DHS girls' softball team** lost a semi-final game to Twin Valley during the state championships at Shippensburg State College. The Whippettes, who also lost to Twin Valley in their first game of the season, had a 17-2 overall record and won the Ches-Mont League crown.

The **DHS baseball squad** also won the Ches-Mont League, but it lost to Pennsbury in the District I playoffs.

Recent local **property transfers** included: 307 Morris Rd., Uwchlan, \$64,500; 1431 Crestmont Dr., West Bradford, \$27,500; 33 Jenkins Dr., East Caln, \$73,500; 110 Chapel Ct., East Brandywine, \$41,600; 225 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Downingtown, \$40,000; 37 Christine Dr., Upper Uwchlan, \$61,551.

The **Glenmoore Fire Co.** housed a \$33,000 field truck and a \$84,000 pumper-tanker during festivities that attracted some 200 firefighters.

Confirmed at **Messiah Lutheran Church** were George Bradford, Joann Carl, Katherine Donaldson, Holly Henry, Jane and Joan Leffler, Sheri Leonard, Roseann Merkel and William Schelkopf.

New officers of the **Downingtown Lions Club** were Dick Byerly, president; Horace Schanely, first vice president; John Canning, second vice president; Lew Pyle, third vice president; David Swindin, secretary; and Dick Herbster, treasurer.

Glyn Jenkins, a teacher at Old East Ward School, was elected president of the **Downingtown Area Education Association**. Also elected were Barbara McLaughlin, first vice president; Leonard Fredericks, second vice president; Martha Waring, recording secretary; Lynn Morgan, corresponding secretary; and Walter Supplee, treasurer. James Eisenhardt was executive director of the association.

Pledges exceeded \$900 when the **Downingtown Area Junior Tennis Association** conducted a 24-hour tennis marathon fundraiser on the Kerr Park courts. Steve Steimer and Pam Smith had the most sponsors.

There were **507 seniors** who graduated from DHS. Students selected to speak at the commencement, but were not heard because the ceremony was cut short because of rain, were Suzanne Gable, Margot Haynes, Susan Berry and David Forbes. Class officers were David Salinas, president; Elizabeth Antrim, vice president; Andrea Deufel, treasurer; and Anne Fisher, secretary.

Local students who made the **Dean's List** at Millersville State College were Ann DiOttavio, Luann Ross, Katherine Conahan, Doreen Kuneck and Michael Polinko.

New members of **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville, were Arthur and Carol Griffith, Gary and Patricia Hannum, Elizabeth Hoffman, Judith Scanlin, Charlotte Vogel and Louise Watterson.

Winners in the Downingtown Police Department **Fish Rodeo** included Fran Talucci, first blue gill; Robbie Marburger, largest blue gill; Dino Sarmiento, first crappie; Mark Whitson, biggest crappie; Tina Fox, first trout; Nelson Yocum, biggest trout; Ricky Luminella, first bass; Bobby Berry, biggest bass; and Jeff Steidler, first and biggest catfish.

Eight Girl Scouts in **Cadette Troop 1242**, West Bradford, earned first class badges. They were Cheryl Beatty, Beth Bozarth, Kelly Dempsey, Terrilyn Elliott, Debbie Kain, Natalie Koh, Kamie Marshall and Amy McClure.

It's the ruins of the Hunt-Pollock Grist Mill



Jamie Bruton is a truly perceptive scholar because he was first person to correctly identify this as a photo of the remnants of the Hunt-Pollock grist mill on Race Street, just off Manor Avenue in Downingtown.

The mill, powered by two wooden wheels driven by water from a raceway linked to Beaver Creek, was built in 1759 by Roger Hunt. The raceway's sluice gate controlled the flow of water to the mill when it was in operation and diverted the water to the Beaver Creek when the mill was not in operation, according to Don Greenleaf, longtime borough manager. A large French-style mill stone ground the grain and supposedly is still inside the ruins, adds Greenleaf.

Hunt had coordinated the movement of supplies from this part of Chester County during the French and Indian War. After Hunt died in 1764, the mill changed hands several times over the next 82 years, until Col. Samuel Ringwalt bought it 1846.

Ringwalt was one of the people who fostered the incorporation of Downingtown as a borough in 1859. And after Ringwalt led the call to support the Union when the Civil War began, by calling a meeting which resulted in enlisting about 17% of the town's male population, he became quartermaster of the Second Brigade of the Pennsylvania Reserves, commanded by Gen. George Meade.

Ringwalt died in 1875, and his family sold the mill to John T. Pollock in 1894. In 1911, it was sold to John T. Pollock's grandson, William T. Pollock, who owned the mill property until he died in 1956 and his wife inherited it.

After Charles and Daniel Tabas bought the property from Mrs. Pollock, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

In 1992, the property was bought by the Downingtown Municipal Water Authority, and, two years later, ownership was transferred to the borough government. Today, the mill property is part of the 15-acre Samuel Tabas Memorial Park, along Manor Avenue, which was donated by the Tabas family to the borough in 2004.

(Editor's note: Much of the information about the mill's history was found in the 1979 application for the National Register for Historic Places:

www.dot7.state.pa.us/ce_imagery/phmc_scans/H050987_01H.pdf, and the 1959 Historic American Buildings Survey in 1959:

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pnp/habshaer/pa/pa0200/pa0268/data/pa0268data.pdf>.

Both photos were provided by Ed Lacey, great, great grandson of John T. Pollock.)



The Hunt-Pollock mill, as it looked in 1900.

What happened to the pump house and reservoir?

Though she's no longer a school librarian or an editor in the McGraw-Hill children's materials department, Eileen Moyer still is an inquisitive soul. And although Eileen has been concerned about the borough's future for many years (she has served on Downingtown Planning Commission for 40 years) she's also curious about the borough's past, as well. That's why she sent us the query noted below.

In the 1950s, those of us who grew up in the Washington Avenue/Green Street neighborhood of Downingtown spent countless hours playing in the creek—Parke Run; also spelled Park on some old maps—at the Green Street bridge.

Ten or fifteen yards upstream from the bridge were the remnants of the foundation of a small pump house. And back in the time when railroads were powered by steam engines, water was pumped uphill from the creek to a reservoir near the railroad tracks, and then to a tank with a pipe which could be swung out over the steam engine.

Did the water pipe go over or under Lincoln or Jackson Avenues? And when was the pumping operation discontinued?

My brother, Jack Moyer, told me that the reservoir was located closer to Chestnut Street than to Green Street, and it had a brick floor.

And an older relative told Jack that the pump house operation was no longer needed after a trough/scoop mechanism was installed there. The water trough ran parallel to the tracks, allowing a device on the steam engine to scoop up water, without the engine having to stop.

Jack thinks the trough was located near the tracks in the west end of the borough, in the area of Gabel Avenue, and the railroad planted hedges there to keep the water from splashing the cars on Lancaster Avenue when the train went through.

Anyone who has some information and/or insights on the railroad pumping operation is encouraged to send it to: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Where was Seven Springs Tree Farm?



We came across this metal sign on eBay. The sign was made in 1947. If you know where it was located, please tell us via Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Ever hear of a calithumpian orchestra?

Nancy Thompson, local Girl Scout leader for decades, recently gave us a copy of the Philips Family Newsletter, which is sent to descendants of Joseph and Mary Philips, who settled in Chester County in 1755. One of the items in the newsletter noted that:

Josiah Philips (1867-1961) was a prominent resident of Downingtown. He served, for 30 years, as superintendent of the Sunday School at First Baptist Church. He also was a postmaster, a leader of the Masons, and was president of the Downingtown Building and Loan Association from its founding until his death at the age of 94.

Despite Josiah's reputation as a dignified and sober man, a local newspaper reported on February 8, 1898 that "the discordant strains from a calithumpian orchestra were heard from the residence of Josiah Philips and his bride. The occasion had been arranged in good form, and the permission of the Burgess (mayor) had been secured on the grounds that there would be no riotous conduct, and that all of the affairs of the evening would be orderly.

None of that information is troubling to us. However, we're befuddled about the term "calithumpian orchestra." According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, it's a "noisy boisterous band or parade."

Anyone ever heard of such a musical group in the Downingtown area. Perhaps your Great Uncle Harry was one of those guys whose musical skills were limited to banging on pie pans? Please send your responses to: Info@downingtowntownareahistoricalociety.org.

Events and Activities in the Downingtown Area

Mac-n-Cheese Cook-off

The second annual Cook-off will be held, rain or shine, from noon to 4 PM Sunday, June 9 at Kerr Park in Downingtown. Hosted by the Downingtown-Thorndale Rotary Club, the cook-off will have local restaurants, businesses, organizations and hometown cooks competing against each other for the title "BEST Mac-n-Cheese in Chester County." Admission is \$10 per person, enabling people to sample each participating group's dish. Tickets can be purchased at the event. The Cook-off's sponsors suggest that people come early in the afternoon, since contestants may run out of food before 4 PM.

Downingtowntown 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.

Offerings include: local fruits and vegetables; pasture raised meats (beef, pork, lamb, veal) and poultry, fresh eggs; dairy products, including cheeses; whole grain breads and other baked goods; handmade pasta and sauce; honey and maple syrup; small-batch frozen desserts; artisan chocolates; hummus and salsa; jams and jellies; roasted coffee and hand-blended teas; fresh ground nut butters; field grown flowers; handmade soap; and doggie treats.

The market will also feature weekly musical guests and activities for children. 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.

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, contact us at:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org