



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

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

[www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org)

Vol. 4, No.20

May 16, 2013

## Where and What Is This?



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

[Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org).

## Local news published 52 years ago

The following news items were originally published in local newspapers in May and June 1961:

Awards were presented to three—Judy Jones, Georgia Wagner and Lewis Wilson—of the 123 **DHS graduates**, during commencement exercises at the new high school on Manor Avenue. Officers of the senior class were Lee Thomson, president; John Snyder, vice president; Peter Bousum, secretary; and Janice Windle, treasurer.

**Faculty awards** for excellence in particular subjects at DHS were presented to: Barbara Noll, English and language; Carmelia Baxter, social studies and music; Joan Farra, mathematics; Linda Bloom, science; Mary Louise LeFevre, commercial; Mary Louise Parker, art; Benjamin Hash, agriculture; Warren Howe, industrial arts; and Toni McCombs, home economics.

Employees of the **Milprint** plant in Downingtown, and their families, were treated to a two-hour show of live entertainment. Milprint, a subsidiary of Philip Morris Inc., was the world's largest printer and converter of flexible packaging materials. The Downingtown operation had 500 employees.

Members of the Junior Youth Fellowship at **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, who won a week at summer camp, were Diane and Judy Shirk, Dougie Habecker, Sandy Mattison, Joy Emery, Susan Ashenfelder, Janet Haas, Jay Rambo and Bobby Murphy.

Awards at a Court of Honor, conducted by **Boy Scout Troop 82** at Messiah Lutheran Church, Downingtown, were presented to: Eugene Dennis, Richard Keller, Fred Pollock, and Larry Farnum, tenderfoot badge; Billy Barlow, first class badge; Charles Backenstose, Star Scout. Morris Farnum and Ronald Renshaw received 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary awards.

Officers of the Senior High MYF at **Hopewell Methodist Church** were: Robert Shank, president; Jeanne Watts, vice president; Jill Watts, secretary; and Dale Krapf, treasurer.

Christa Edelen, Debbie Harrison, Martha Chalfant, Barbara Clapp and Kathy Ayers, members of the **Safety Patrol in Wallace Township schools**, were among the 300 Chester County boys and girls who participated in the National AAA School Safety Patrol Parade in Washington, DC.

Officers of the new **Girls 4-H Club of Chester Springs** were Pam Twaddell, president; Barbara Knox, vice president; Barbara Fuhr, secretary; Harriet Lauffer, treasurer; Jacqueline West, game leader; Donna Twaddell, song leader; and Rosiland McMinamee, news reporter.

Members of Brownie Troop 83 who toured the **Downingtown Paper Box** plant included Carol Steidler, Grace DiBerardinis, Brenda Murphy, Anne Ziegler, Debbie Beam, Martha Dunlap, Nancy Barlow, Betsy Robbins, Joan Hartman, Terrie Hayes, Debbie Barry, and Susan and Janice Mento.

Officers elected to lead the **DHS band** during the 1961-62 school years were Robert Shank, captain; Neil Shields, lieutenant; and Barbara Thompson, staff sergeant. Also, Ralph Girafalco, Marie Pollock, Mary Ann Smedley, James Williamson, all sergeants; and Robert Crane, Ruth Ann Miller, Helen Simmons and Donna Thompson, all corporals.

Plans for **Boy Scout Troop 64's** summer activities were to be resolved at Bethel AME Church, Downingtown. The troop's leaders included William Tinson, chairman; Leon Brown Jr., assistant chairman; Theodore Williams, treasurer; and Robert Miller, secretary.

Officers of the DHS chapter of the **Future Farmers of America** during the following school year included Walter Jankowski, president; Edgar Donnon, vice president; Robert Frame, secretary; Chester Ortlip, reporter; James DuBosq, sentinel; and Robert Ruark, treasurer.

When Judith Ann Mento was the May Queen at **St. Joseph's Catholic Church's May Procession**, her attendants were first communicants Donna Lang, Kathleen Dougherty, John Cerra and Michael Milano.

Chuckie Mitman, a third grader at East Ward School, was the fourth-place winner in the **jingle contest**, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Forestry Association.

An armed bandit covered his face with a bath towel when he robbed **Bill's Country Store in Romansville** in West Bradford. Store owner Bill Osborne told state police that he was forced to hand over \$110 to the robber, who brandished a German Luger pistol.

Members of **Boy Scout Troop 83**, Lionville, who attended a camporee at the King Ranch, near Unionville, were Donald Corneal, Steve and Bill Behrnt, Gregg and Brad Gregory, Roger Lackey, Peter Plank, Robert Worthington, Thomas Phipps, Arthur and Dan Winkler, Thomas and Dick Shreiner, Charles Wertz, Donald Basset and Bill Daley.

**Seventeen Brownies** from Troop 94, Lionville, visited the Statue of Liberty and other sites on a trip to New York City. They included: Edna Pivonka, Toni Rossi, Carol Fowler, Rita Tipton, Brenda Lotz, Helen Bittmann, Joyce Mull, Nancy Sommer, Penny Renz, Debbie Devaney, Nancy Fillman, Betty Taylor, Heather Smith, Charlene Barton, Darlene Windle and Joann Risbon.

There was a battle over **Upper Uwchlan Township's** plan to straighten a 100-yard-long, S-shaped curve in Township Line Road, near the Route 100 intersection, which forms the boundary between Uwchlan and Upper Uwchlan Townships. The Modernist camp—mostly residents of the two-year-old Susan Hill development—supported the plan to pave the dirt and gravel road, and chop down a venerable, 150-foot-tall tulip popular tree so the road could be straightened. But the Traditionalist faction, who wanted to keep the area “truly rural,” claimed that 90 percent of the vehicular traffic on the road was local, and paving it would increase the traffic load. However, after the supervisors studied the issue more thoroughly, they decided to back off on their plan to upgrade the road.

## It's the mansion at Springton Manor



John Miller is a perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo (taken by Mike Dunn) of the mansion at Springton Manor Farm in Wallace Township. That's no surprise because, after he retired as a teacher at Beaver

Creek School in Downingtown, John was a part-time park technician and historian for several years at Springton Manor.

According to John, Springton Manor Farm was settled in 1730 by the Robert McConaghy family. The 300 acres the McConaghy family claimed were originally part of 10,000 acres set aside for the use of the Penn Family as a manor site. From 1730 to the present, eight families would claim the farm as their home. And two of these families, the McIlvaines and the Bartols, had the greatest impact on the property and buildings you see today.

James McIlvaine, who purchased the farm in 1818, sold it to his son, Abraham Robinson McIlvaine, in 1830. McIlvaine built manor house, which originally had six rooms—three each on the first and second floors. He was a close friend of Abe Lincoln, from when they lived in the same boarding house, while they served in Congress together. McIlvaine also helped persuade Lincoln to run for President.

In 1886, George Bartol, a successful Philadelphia businessman, purchased the property from the estate of Dr. George Washington Atlee, who had purchased the farm from the McIlvaine family. Bartol was responsible for shaping the farm as it is today.

Newspaper accounts relate that Bartol had the original barn on the property taken down and erected a great barn in its place. He also built a tenant house. Both of the buildings remain on the property. The newspaper report also indicated that Bartol planned to tear down the manor house and replace it with a more appropriate building for his family. “Fortunately,” says John, “over the winter of 1886-87, Mr. Bartol decided to keep the manor house.” Instead, he added a kitchen wing, with bedrooms above, a porte cochere, and a veranda on to the original building in 1887-1888.

The next major changes to the manor house were done in 1912, when the porte cochere was removed, and it was replaced with the pillared porch we see today. Also in 1912, a two-story addition was built on the east side of the manor house. The addition added a music room on the first floor and a large bedroom suite on the second. During the construction, the walls separating the east and west parlors were removed, creating one large space. At the same time, the original stairway to the second floor was replaced with a more impressive center stairway.

Evidence is scarce, but there is some support to the belief that, during the 1912 renovations, the dormers may have been enlarged to make the building more balanced, with the increased length caused by the new addition.

Although the site was significantly researched before it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979, “there is still much to be learned about the manor house and the other buildings on the property,” concludes John.

The site has been owned and operated by Chester County’s Parks and Recreation Department since 1980.

You can find more details on Springton Manor in the application for its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places:

[www.dot7.state.pa.us/ce\\_imagery/phmc\\_scans/H001585\\_01H.pdf](http://www.dot7.state.pa.us/ce_imagery/phmc_scans/H001585_01H.pdf).

## **Events & activities in the Downingtown area**

### ***Mac-n-Cheese Cook-off***

The second annual Cook-off will be held, rain or shine, at noon 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.

### ***Downingtown Farmers Market***

The Downingtown Farmers Market at Kerr Park is open from 3-7 PM every Thursday. All 25 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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, send an email to:**

**[Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org)**