



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 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@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

DHS Alumni Association establishes Hall of Fame

The Downingtown Area High School Alumni Association has established a Hall of Fame, to recognize alumni who have made a distinguished mark in their career, positively contributed to society, or achieved success in a worthwhile endeavor.

The Hall of Fame Selection Committee has begun seeking nominees worthy of induction. Nominations must be submitted and received either by mail or online by November 30.

Nomination forms can be accessed via:

www.downingtowntownalumni.org/Documents/DHS%20Hall%20of%20Fame%20Nomination%20Form.pdf.

The Selection Committee will choose no more than 10 candidates each year. Selections will be announced by January 31, and the inductions will take place at the annual Alumni Association banquet. For more details about the banquet, access: www.downingtowntownalumni.org.

Inductions into the Hall of Fame will occur every year. The Selection Committee reserves the right to determine whether or not nominees meet the requirements for acceptance. Self-nominations will not be considered. Nominees must have graduated from any Downingtown Area High School at least 10 years ago. All nominations will be held in consideration for two years.

Nominees' accomplishments will be considered in the following areas: Arts and Entertainment, Athletics and Coaching, Business and Professional Affiliations, Charitable Involvement, Education and Community Service, Military Achievement, Politics and Government and Science and Engineering.

For more information, visit the DAHS Hall of Fame website, www.downingtowntownalumni.org, or contact: DAHS Hall of Fame Committee, 540 Trestle Place, Downingtown, PA 19335, or call (610) 269-8460 ext. 6208, or send an email to: downingtowntownalumni@gmail.com.



This 1927 photo of the display window of Theodore Griffith and Son's store in Downingtown's business district shows that they carried a wide array of hunting supplies. Among the stuffed animals on display, that's a skunk in the lower left corner. Marianne Griffith donated the photo.

Downingtown area news items 67 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local newspapers in late June 1946.

The State Highway Department revealed that it awarded contracts to resurface Route 30 in Downingtown, from the Swan Hotel in Center Square to the borough's western boundary. The project included removing the **trolley tracks**, which had been installed on West Lancaster Avenue in 1906.

Editor's Note: Here's a brief history of the trolley system in Downingtown, published in the January 26, 2012 edition of *The Hist-O-Gram*.

"The West Chester Street Railway Co. won the contract in 1902 to build the street car line that extended from West Chester's High Street and ended at the Swan Hotel at the intersection of Brandywine and Lancaster Avenues in Downingtown, and ultimately would reach Coatesville.

After installation of the Downingtown branch reached Lancaster Avenue, extending the line westward along Route 30 in the borough was begun almost immediately. But expectations that the expansion all the way to Coatesville would be completed in three months were unfulfilled, as a series of obstacles stalled the project until 1906.

The section between Downingtown and Coatesville became the West Chester Street Railway's most profitable section, by 1919. And in the 1920s, twice as many trolleys were operated on the Downingtown-Coatesville link, at 30-minute intervals, while street cars on the Downingtown-West Chester branch never ran more frequently than once an hour.

By 1927, West Chester Street Railway's revenues were beginning to drop, and the company raised its price, for each of the five zones in the 14.5 miles between West Chester and Coatesville, to a dime. Despite the fare increase, trolley service revenue continued to decline, primarily due to the availability of competing bus service, the growing popularity of automobiles, and improved highways. As a result, the Railway company shut down its trolley business in 1929, and focused on its bus operations. The company's land assets were sold for \$350,000 at a public sale in January 1930."

The Downingtown Chamber of Commerce announced that a **nylon hosiery plant** would soon be built at an undisclosed site in the borough. The Chamber's recently elected officers were W. P. Canby, president; James McGowan, vice president; F. W. Bicking, treasurer; and Everett Hoopes, secretary. Elected to the board of directors were Herbert Kreider, J. J. Joyce, J. J. Brownstein, E. L. Towson and Creston Shoemaker.

Officers sworn in to lead the Auxiliary of the Charles F. Moran **American Legion Post** were Mrs. Leroy Helms, president; Mrs. John Fisher, treasurer; Esther Williams, recording secretary; Mrs. C. O. Brown, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Paul Dague, historian; Anna Dougherty, chaplain; and Mrs. Jessie Scott, sergeant-at-arms.

Teachers and their assistants for the 93 kids attending the **Lionville Vacation Bible School** were Mrs. Schuyler Rennard, kindergarten; Elizabeth Happersett, first grade; Helen Windle, second grade; Mrs. John Carmichael, third and fourth grades; Anna Dewees, fifth and sixth grades; and Mrs. Garfield Matthews, seventh, eighth and ninth grades. Caroline Matthews was the First Aid nurse. Rev. George Harting of St. Paul's E & R Church was in charge, and he was assisted by Rev. George Bass of St. Paul's Lutheran.

Students at **Margaretta Helm's nursery school**, who graduated to first grade, included: Richard Anderson, Billy Donohue, Jakey Edge, Eddie and Judy Gregg, Mary Ann Hamilton, Joan Kent, Sally Laird, Timmy Mahan, Fay Manzi, Jocko Nelson, Jerry Ross, Duer and Betty Smedley, Bobby Stevens, Champ Stehman and Tommy Yost.

Firemen honored for their meritorious service by the Downingtown Rotary Club were William Backenstose of the Alert Fire Co. and Percy Hyde of the Minquas Fire Co.

Seven former **Marshallton School** students, who graduated in 1946 from West Chester High School, were Betty Keehn, Mabel Sellers, Jane Hall, Mary Ciaffoni, Robert Ludwick, Richard Johnson and Grant Hadden.

Newly elected officers of the **Downingtown Lions Club** were Dr. Harlan Sharp, president; Charles Emery, first vice president; Herbert Bowersock, second vice president; William Allen, third vice president; Vinton Smedley, secretary; Joseph Matthewson, treasurer; Evans Miller, financial secretary; Fred Hill, tail twister; Mervin Thomas, assistant tail twister; Rev. Lester Brubaker, lion tamer; and Nelson Jones, assistant lion tamer.

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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.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@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

Anyone know where this house is located?



Many of our Hist-O-Gram subscribers assume that the location of every **Where and What Is This?** photo is correctly identified within minutes after each week's edition is released. Nope! For example, no one even tried to guess the location of this one. So, we'll give it another shot in a week or two.

Block captains needed for Luminaria project

Good Neighbors in the Downingtown area who want to make the Christmas holidays brighter this year are being asked to participate in the Downingtown Area Historical Society's Luminaria project.

The tradition of displaying as many as 15,000 lighted Luminaria candle sets along the sidewalks and driveways of homes in Downingtown and the surrounding townships has been a local Christmas Eve tradition for more than 30 years.

The Historical Society is looking for volunteers who will serve as block captains, to help make the Luminaria project a success by taking orders from neighbors, friends and family for Luminaria sets. The sets are comprised of a candle positioned in a plastic base, which is placed in a wax-coated paper bag.

The Luminaria project is a major source of funding for the Historical Society. Proceeds from the project are used for the continued restoration and maintenance of 304-year-old Ashbridge House, the Historical Society's headquarters, and to preserve its archival collection of documents, photos and artifacts. Ashbridge House is located in front of the Ashbridge Square Shopping Center, on Route 30 in East Caln.

For additional information, call Carol Grigson, project chairman, at 610-269-5413.

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

Programs at the Downingtown Library

Pre-registration is required for the programs listed below, which will be offered at the Downingtown Library, 330 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. You can sign up by accessing www.downintownlibrary.org/ or by calling 610-269-2741.

Friday, November 15 from 4-7 PM and Saturday, November 16, from 9 AM to 4 PM, The Friends of the Downingtown Library will hold a **Fall Flea Market** upstairs at the Downingtown Library. Look through your attics, closets and drawers, and plan to recycle your unused or gently used gadgets, linens, glassware, toys, etc. to help the library. Donations will be accepted through November 13. No clothing or furniture. Goods may be dropped off upstairs at the Downingtown Library Monday through Thursday (9 AM to 7 PM), Friday (9 AM to 4 PM) and Saturday (9 AM to 3 PM)).

Thursday, November 14 at 6:30 PM-**Backyard Birdwatching**. Learn about the histories, habitats and lifestyles of common Chester County birds. Register online via www.downintownlibrary.org or call 610-269-2741.

Tuesday, November 19 at 6:30 PM-**A Brief History of the Trains of King of Prussia**. Historian Michael Shaw will present a program on the past, present and future of the King of Prussia railroads. Register online via www.downintownlibrary.org or call 610-269-2741.

Senior Center's Harvest Hop

7-11 PM Saturday, November 9, Griffith Hall at Ludwig's Fire Co.

Enjoy Swine, Wine & Brew Too!!! Featuring a fabulous Pig Roast and our signature drink: Apple Pie. Live Music provided by local band: Holt 45. Basket Raffles, Beer-A-Mid Raffle, Games & More.

Benefits Downingtown Area Senior Center. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Reservations are \$40 per person (tickets are held for guests at the door). Cost includes: buffet dinner, local craft beer and selection of wines. For ticket reservations, or sponsorship opportunities, call Sue McIntyre at 610.269.3939 or email Sue directly at

Susan.McIntyre@downingtownsensiors.org.

Pancake Breakfast

Downingtown Lions Club's William Woodruff Memorial Pancake Breakfast will be held Saturday, November 23. Serving will be from 7:30 AM until 11:30 AM at Central Presbyterian Church 100 W. Uwchlan Ave., Downingtown. The cost for adults is \$6 and children (4 to 12) is \$4; 3 year olds and under are free. Benefits: "Sight First Kids" and local groups in need.

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