



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 site in this photo will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your identification entries to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

More local news published 52 years ago

Noted below are news items, which were originally published in local newspapers in the latter part of November 1961.

Some 200 people attended a dinner to celebrate the **Downingtown Methodist Church's** 100th anniversary in November 1961. The program, emceed by Raymond Dennis, included a trio--Carol Lillard, Bonnie Dawson and Donna Thompson--that sang two numbers, and Emily Lewis presented a resume of the church's history.

Before the church received a charter in 1861, the congregation, which met in private homes from 1824 until 1833, was served by circuit riders. A small plot on East Lancaster Avenue was purchased from Thomas Webster for \$250 in 1833, and a tiny, stone church was built there by Richard Webster. The original church property was sold in 1860, and a larger church was built across the street, on the site of where the East Ward School was opened in 1923. A new church was built in 1890, on Brandywine Avenue where the DNBFIRST Bank's operations center is now located. The cost of that project, including the land and removal of a carriage shop, totaled nearly \$14,000. The parsonage, next door, was constructed in 1905. A Sunday School addition to the church was completed in 1927. The present church, on East Lancaster Avenue, was dedicated in 1982.

Billy Perdue, 8, of Marshallton, had a story he wrote published in *Jack and Jill Magazine*.

Persons elected to lead **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, were Mrs. Leon Gabel, Mrs. Theresa Eshelman, Thomas Philips and George Bell, trustees; John Frazer, Thomas Gabel and Gordon Stilwell, deacons; Mrs. Lydia McManus, clerk; Mrs. Marvin Shirk, treasurer; Mrs. Gerald Lammey, financial secretary; Wilbur Felten, Sunday School superintendent; Mrs. Ralph Ralston and Josiah Ashenfelder, directors; Clarence Miller, choir director; Mrs. Benjamin Russell, organist; and Elizabeth Miller, Joyce Felten and Mrs. Donald Shields, assistant organists.

DHS seniors who were in the cast of a **three-act play**, directed by Evelyn Hamilton, included Bill Meronry, Helen Simmons, Robert Robinson, Susan Vail, Neil Shields, Anne Lathrop, John McNamara, Betsy Kinlock, Caroline Ash, Gayle Davis, Eileen Shirley, Bonnie Eachus, Nancy Tibel, Steve Wilson, Harry Simms and Billie Stern.

Junior High students who attended a **medical conference**, sponsored by the Chester County TB and Health Society and the Valley Forge Army Hospital, were Connie Hamilton, Marilyn Harmon, Janet Strawsnyder, Audrey Strouse and Peggy Woodland.

To entice Christmas shoppers, the **Barmay Store**, at Pennsylvania and Wallace Avenues, Downingtown, was offering three pairs of seamless nylon stockings for \$1.85, and at **Griffith's Hardware**, 123 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, it cost only \$8.87 for a toaster, an electric can opener or an automatic 12-cup coffee maker.

Members of the **Junior High soccer team** learned fundamentals of the sport taught by coach Lawrence Devlin, but they didn't play any matches. The players were David Corry, David Robbins, Willy Von Hacht, Richard Biondi, John Caldwell, Eric Dietrich, Kenneth Dunn, Robert Geist, Joseph Kirkner, David Jahaney, Wesley Marion, Russell Trego, Paul Bien, Kenneth Sigle, Jay Rambo, Ethan Berry and William Morris.

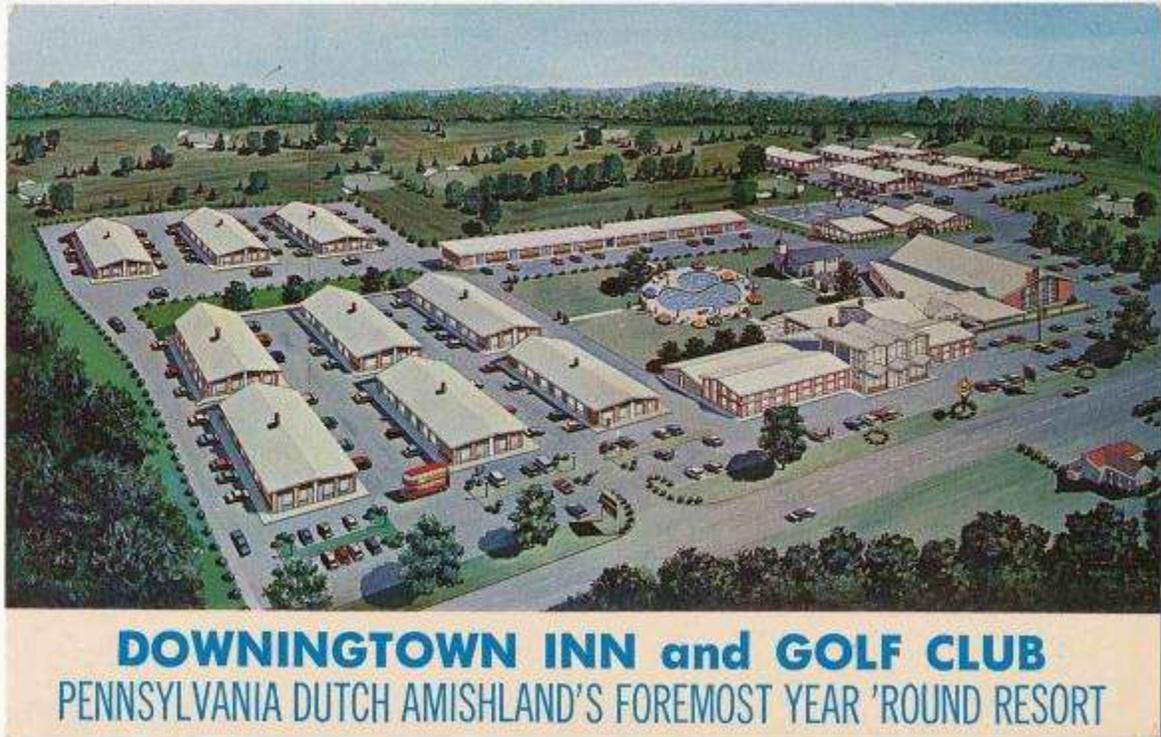
Members of **Brownie Troop 83**, Downingtown, accompanied by leaders Mrs. Herbert Tompkins and Mrs. James Murphy, toured the Eachus Dairy in West Chester. The group included Brenda Murphy, Jean and Michelle Guerrieri, Joan Morris, Denine Koth, Patty Foy, Carol Steidler, Grace and Ann DiBerardinis, Trudy Laird, Joyce Beam, Rosemary Gazzo, Susan Mento, Kathy Windle, Catherine Martin, Diane Peterman, Nancy Barlow, Betsy Robbins and Joan Hartman.

Members of the newly formed **Wallace Township Park and Recreation Committee** were Ralph Hannum, chairman, Betty Templin, Rev. Leonard Bjorkman, Mrs. Robert Mason and Kenneth Comstock.

Customers at **Town Motors** on Route 30, East Caln, only had to put down \$10 if they wanted to buy a 1960 Ford station wagon for \$2,299 or a four-door 1960 Dodge Dart for \$1599.

The outweighed **DHS football squad** beat Coatesville 12-0 on Thanksgiving Day. The Turkey Day classic was the 38th meeting of the two schools. Pint-sized (5-2, 130 pounds) Gordy Flowers scored the first TD, on a drive that featured long gains by Flowers and Walt Horsey. The second Downingtown touchdown was scored in the fourth quarter, after Whippet guard Alvin Wells recovered a Coatesville fumble, and quarterback Jim Price connected with end Sam Westmoreland on a 53-yard pass play.

Downingtown Motor Inn opened in November 1961



The Downingtown Motor Inn, on Route 30 in East Caln opened in November 1961. The 100-acre resort motel complex included convention and banquet facilities that could accommodate as many as 2,500 guests, two swimming pools, and the 1896 Restaurant and cocktail lounge. The Motor Inn's owners were Samuel Tabas, founder; Charles Tabas, chairman; and Daniel Tabas, president. After an 18-hole golf course was built, it was known as the Downingtown Inn and Golf Club. In 1983, the Tabas family sold its holdings in the Inn to the Ramada Corp. in exchange for stock. The Inn was demolished in 1994, and a year later the 750,000 square foot Brandywine Square shopping center opened on the site.

(Editor's Note: Since many of you Hist-O-Gram subscribers worked at the Motor Inn when you were younger, we'd love to publish some of your interesting recollections of what it was like working there. Please send your recollections to: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org).

It's Croft Cottage on Devereux Road in Glenmoore



Wallace Township historian John Miller is a truly perceptive scholar, because he was the first person to correctly identify the building in the above photo (taken by Mike Dunn) as Croft Cottage, on the Devereux Road in Glenmoore

Recollections of Downingtown's early football teams

We retrieved much of the information for the article about the first DHS Homecoming in 1963 for last week's Hist-O-Gram from the program for that day's football game. The program also included many recollections of the beginnings of interscholastic football in Downingtown.

The first football game apparently was played on November 11, 1899, when Downingtown faced the "Athenians" from West Chester, which probably wasn't a high school team. And it's likely that not all the players on the Downingtown squad were high school students back then either. It's also unclear where the game was played, but Downingtown tallied the only score when a player named Duff "kicked a goal" in the first half.

Things didn't go well after that, according an article in the *Daily Local News*, because: "The final outcome of the game cannot be determined since the game was called on account of darkness. When the Athenians left the field, they took the ball with them, but it was recovered before the West Chester team left town."

The Athenians probably travelled to and from the game in a horse-drawn wagon, since the trolley line between Downingtown and the countyseat didn't get rolling until 1902.

The next record of a DHS football team was briefly reported in the *Daily Local News* in October 1901, when the local high school was seeking games on its "suitable athletic field" with teams whose players weighed an average of 125 pounds.

We're not sure where that "suitable" field was located in 1901. But in the early in the 20th Century, Downingtown's football team used the field behind the high school (later West Ward Elementary School) on West Lancaster Avenue and on two baseball diamonds. One diamond was located across Lancaster Avenue from the high school, where Priori's Mattress Warehouse is today, and the other was on the baseball field in the middle of the race track, located near the intersection of Boot Road and Route 322.

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.

Paid ads for businesses

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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

Halloween Parade

The Downingtown Halloween Parade will be held at 3 PM on Saturday, October 26, starting in front of Beaver Creek School, 601 W. Pennsylvania Avenue, then heading east to Kerr Park, where judging will take place. You must be in the parade in order to be judged. Small cash prizes will be awarded to the to the three winners in several categories. No political entries will be allowed in the parade. No registration or fee is required to enter the parade. You can find details regarding the Halloween Parade by going to www.dtownchristmas.com, and clicking on the Halloween Parade tab on the left hand side. If you have questions, call Dianne at 610-269-4203 or email dtownhalloween@aol.com.

Ghost Walks

Downingtown Historical & Parks Commission & Downingtown Area Paranormal Investigators are teaming up again to bring you the 5th annual Downingtown Ghost Walk throughout two frightening days. The spooktacular activity includes a guided tour to some of Downingtown's most historic and haunted landmarks. Downingtown Paranormal Investigators will present documented stories in order to give tour-walkers an evening that is spooky and historic.

Tickets are \$7; they're on sale at these Downingtown locations: Borough Hall, 4 W. Lancaster Ave.; Margo's Old Fashioned Ice Cream, 131 Mill Rd.; and Downingtown Country Gifts, 147 E. Lancaster Ave. Walks start at Dane Décor, 216 E. Lancaster Ave. Walking Tours will be led by historical figures from Downingtown's past. Walk dates are: Saturday, Oct 26. Line forms at 4:15 PM. No Admission after 8:30 PM and Sunday, Oct 27. Line forms at 3:45 PM. No Admission after 8 PM.

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 <http://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 from October 21 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.downingtownlibrary.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.downingtownlibrary.org or call 610-269-2741.

Prescription Drug Take-Back Day

The Downingtown Police Department and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public another opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous, expired, unused and unwanted prescription drugs on National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day from 7 AM to 2 PM on Saturday, Oct. 26. Bring your medications for disposal to Downingtown Borough Hall Annex Building at 4 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. For more information, call 610-269-0344, ext. 200.

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@downingtownseniors.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