

Merry Christmas!



Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

The past is never done. It is not even past-William Faulkner

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Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the site, shown in the photo above, will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

How Downingtown area supported U.S. troops during World War I

World War I began in Europe in 1914, but the U. S. didn't declare war on Germany and its allies until April 6, 1917. Shortly after the first American troops landed in France in June 1917,

President Woodrow Wilson urged the nation's citizens to help the American Red Cross meet the needs of the thousands of young men fighting in Europe.

The response was overwhelming in Downingtown and all across America. Noted below are examples on how area residents reacted to President Wilson's plea for assistance in the summer of 1917, based on articles published in the *Downingtown Archive* at that time.

As soon as a Red Cross chapter was established in Downingtown in June, the leaders—Dr. Edward Kerr, President; B. F. Eckman, secretary; and Ellis Y. Brown Jr., treasurer—decided that the chapter would conduct a three-day campaign over a weekend to immediately raise \$5,000.

The total collected reached \$5,393.25 (nearly \$100,000 in today's dollars) by the third day of the campaign. In addition to individual donations garnered via volunteers' door-to-door efforts, that sum also included special collections at local churches during Sunday services, plus donations by local businesses and organizations.

To keep the enthusiasm going, "the finest parade Downingtown has ever seen" was conducted on a Saturday night in July. Many of the local men who had registered for the draft were in the line of march. And one of the floats in the parade demonstrated how surgical dressings could be made at home by women. Following the parade, a rally was held in the high school.

By early August, women were making surgical dressings two days a week in workrooms initially set up in Joseph Miller's house at 317 E. Lancaster Ave., and later in the Downingtown Library, at 330 E. Lancaster Ave. They also were making sheets, pillow cases, towels, operating gowns for doctors and nurses, pajamas and bath robes. Soon, four sewing machines were humming in the workrooms. For those who did not want to sew, there was much cutting and folding of surgical compresses to be done.

However, support for the Red Cross wasn't limited to the borough of Downingtown. Dr. Howard Pennell, who was responsible for medical supplies and surgical dressings, reported that many of the newly-formed auxiliaries in surrounding communities—including Brandywine Manor, Glen Moore and Milford Mills—also had begun to make bandages.

Widespread community support for the Red Cross during World War I was critical, because 18,000 Red Cross nurses provided much of the medical care in 54 military hospitals overseas. And 4,800 Red Cross ambulance drivers provided first aid on the front lines.

However, not all was hunky-dory in Downingtown back in the summer of 1917. There was continued labor strife at the Downingtown Manufacturing Co., because picketing representatives from the Moulders Union in Philadelphia were trying to organize the plant's employees. And the six-year-old Downingtown Business Men's Association had folded.

Worse yet, John V. Newlin, 19-year-old son of Richard M. and Alice E. Newlin, who lived on the Ashbridge estate in the Whitford area, died in a military hospital on August 5, 1917. Two days earlier, he had been severely wounded by a shell shot from a German airplane, while serving with the American Field Ambulance Corps in France. Initially buried at Fleury-sur-Aire, Meuse, Private Newlin's body was transferred to the Meuse-Argonne American Military Cemetery in Romagne, France. In addition to posthumously receiving the Croix de Guerre, Newlin also received the Medaille Militaire, France's highest award for bravery. While he was a student at Princeton University, Class of 1919, he had worked on the staff of the *Nassau Lit* with classmate F. Scott Fitzgerald. Newlin left college to join American Field Service on May 26, 1917.

Despite those challenges, however, Downingtown area citizens soldiered on in their efforts to support the war effort until November 1918, when the armistice was signed.

Local news originally published in December 1978

Noted below are news items originally published in the *East Branch Citizen*, a Downingtown weekly, in the early part of December 1978.

The **Downingtown School Board** approved the construction of six additional classrooms at West Bradford and Pickering Creek Elementary Schools.

The **Downingtown Jaycees** were recognized by the organization's state and national leaders for doubling the size of the local chapter—to 47 members—in less than a month. Officers of the Downingtown chapter were Charles Shagren, chairman; Bob Young, president; Lee Hawthorne, vice president; Dave Swenson, treasurer; Joe Darlington, secretary; and Bob Cassidy, chaplain.

A Teen Center was one of the options considered by **Uwchlan Township** at a supervisors' meeting when a large number of residents came to a Gripe Night to complain about problems caused by teenagers.

DHS students named to the **District Chorus** were Jim Wychgel, Judy Honey, Chris Dagher, Amy Trego, Curt Schroder, Jody Cura, Art Freas, Dan Shutt, Mark Kottmeyer, and Kurt Thompson.

Members of the Blackfoot Patrol, **Boy Scout Troop 82**, Downingtown, which placed third in the District first aid meet, were Rob and Chris McClarin, Joe Swift, Bob Hausch and Ron Orr.

DHS football players who made the All-Ches-Mont team were Gregg Jackson, Jay Carbutt, Tim Burns, Bob Ricci and Dave Kucera.

Elected as officers of the **Downingtown-Lionville Babe Ruth League** were Jack Oberly, president; Mike Whiteman, vice president; Pat Murphy, secretary; Penn Frey, treasurer; and Jim Rainey, player agent.

Those who received pins at an investiture of the new Brownie Troop 931 were Holly Brown, Kelly Capriotti, Kim Harpel, Bonnie Lewis, Lynn Phipps, Erin Schaible, Kelly Smedley, Jill Smith, Jeannie Stone, Mandi Wilkinson and Vanessa Sommer.

Recent **property transfers** included: 227 Mary St., Downingtown, \$29,000; 575 Westwood Drive, Uwchlan, \$68,000; 1493 Glenside Ave., West Bradford, \$53,300; 214 Meadow Drive, Caln, \$45,900; 536 Whitford Hills Road, West Whiteland, \$140,000; 110 Holly Drive, East Brandywine, \$75,085; 5 Christine Drive, Upper Uwchlan, \$63,400;

Keith Grant, Mike Stranere and Gene Anthony, all DHS students, received awards from the James Lincoln Arc Welding Foundation.

Members of the **DHS Class of 1978**, who took the Scholastic Aptitude Test, had average scores of 447 in the verbal test and 475 in the math test. The national averages that year were 429 in verbal and 468 in math.

New members of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** were Nancy Heriegel, Diana Cohen, Brenda McDade, Susan Piccone, Myrna Kidman, Kerry Menas and Dottie Matthews.

Downingtown area news 67 years ago

The following news items were retrieved from local papers which were published in the latter part of June 1947.

Children who received awards for outstanding work, while attending **Windsor Baptist Church's** Vacation Bible School, were Linda Wells, Jesse Maxton, Tommy Gottier, Eddie Popjoy, Shirley Garvine, Doris Hoffman, Mildred Sorensen and Mary Valkenburg.

Downingtown's **Terry DiBerardinis** placed second in the evening gown and talent (She sang "How Deep Is the Ocean") competitions during the Miss Chester County Pageant, sponsored by the Downingtown Chamber of Commerce. The pageant was held at the Acorn building (*Anyone know where that is or was located?*) in the borough.

New officers of the **Downingtown Women of the Moose** were Dorothy McClure, past graduate regent; Helen Babb, senior regent; Nellie Donovan, junior regent; Carrie Francella, treasurer; and Mary Algiers, recorder.

The following **piano students** of Margareta Helm participated in a recital: Virginia Manley, Beatrice Jameson, Joan Garrison, Charles Bransford, Fay Stauffer, Peggy Flinn, Louise Bartelmo, Katherine Mosteller, Phyllis Griffith, Barbara Thomas, Joan Lenhardt, Dorothea Snyder, Katherine Moschitta, Shirley McClintock, Catherine Casner, Margareta Sciarretta and Barbara Griffith,

Virginia Bare and Nelba Beamer won an essay contest, sponsored by the **Downingtown Lions Club**.

Teachers on the staff of the Vacation Bible School, co-sponsored by **St. Paul's Reformed** and **St. Paul's Lutheran** Churches in Lionville, included Anna Dewees, Mrs. George Graham, Mrs. Schuyler Rennard, Jane Wallace, Mrs. Harry Dewees, Mrs. John Carmichael, Elizabeth Cornwall, Elizabeth Happersett, Caroline Matthews Hamilton, Mrs. George Harting and Harry Quay.

For the first time since before World War II, Downingtown's Alert Fire Co. sponsored a fair at the corner of Stuart and Manor Avenues. The grand prize, presented on the final night, was a new Buick Sedanette.

New officers of **Marshallton Methodist Church's** WSCS group were Mrs. Earl Johnson, president; Mrs. Clinton Griffiths, secretary; and Mrs. Harry Wickersham, social relations chairman.

There's still time to make a tax-deductible donation

Hist-O-Gram subscribers still have time to show their appreciation for our weekly newsletters by making a generous, tax-deductible donation to the Downingtown Area Historical Society. We're an all-volunteer, non-profit operation, whose annual budget is absorbed by expenses such as utility bills, insurance costs, our security system and typical maintenance. And membership fees don't come close to covering all those expenses.

And we still need to repair the leaking stone wall on the east side of Ashbridge House, a project that will cost thousands of dollars.

That's why we're asking you to please send a donation to: DAHS, Post Office Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335 (or to use Paypal: [click here](#)). We are most grateful for your generosity. And EVERY subscriber will continue to receive our free Hist-O-Grams every week.

Officers of the Downingtown Area Historical Society are: Parry Desmond, president; Ernie Jameson, vice president; Carol Grigson, treasurer and archivist; Marion Piccolomini, recording secretary. The board of directors includes: Harry Helms, Mike Dunn, Francine Dague, Phil Dague and Rahn Brackin.

It's at 107 Skyline Drive in Upper Uwchlan



No one guessed the location of the house in the photo above. If you look carefully, you can see a 1761 date stone between two of the second floor windows. For more info on the house, see: www.liveinchestercountyarea.com/listing/mlsid/252/propertyid/6455038/

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.net, 610-329-1056, 320 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

Free ads for Non-Profits

Skate For Books Fundraiser

The Caln Skating Center, 4533 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown is supporting the Downingtown Library by donating \$1 from each ticket sold between 10 AM and 2 PM on Wednesday, Dec. 31.

Farmers Market

The Downingtown Farmers Market is now held in Kerr Park, by the gazebo area of Kerr Park on Pennsylvania Avenue in the borough, on Saturdays, from 9 AM to 1 PM.

Brochure on DARC Classes & Activities

You can gain access to the latest DARC brochure, listing all classes and activities, at: www.darcinfo.com. For more info, 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 at 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday 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.