



Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 5, No. 6

February 6, 2014

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, he or she 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.

Downingtown area news published in February 1978

Noted below are news items retrieved from issues of the *East Branch Citizen*, which were published 36 years ago.

The Downingtown area was hit by **back-to-back blizzards** that month. As a result, the borough's street department was working double shifts, as the crew tried to clear the roads. The street crew received an emergency call in the middle of one night to dig out a heavily-drifted Woodbine Road in the east end of the borough, so an ill priest at Villa St. John (now the St. John Vianney Center) could be taken to the hospital in an ambulance. One guy on the street crew characterized one chest-high drift as a "sonuvabitch" because it took so long to dig it out.

Several *East Branch Citizen* readers claimed that kind of language was inappropriate for a small town newspaper. However, an editorial in the next issue noted that, "We suspect the elderly, sick priest, who had to wait until the road crew could clear the road before he could be transported to the hospital that night, would have forgiven the borough worker for his graphic language without batting an eye."

Recent **property transfers** included: 416 Berkley Road, Uwchlan, \$53,750; 12 Surrey Road, Upper Uwchlan, \$68,130; 8 Highland Court, East Brandywine, \$59,530; 1339 Ridgeview Circle, West Bradford, \$60,235; 204 North Lake Drive, Downingtown, \$53,500.

Irv Geschwindt, Jack Hilferty, Darryl Kuhns and Doris Zelina were elected to **Messiah Lutheran Church's** council.

DHS students who made the **District Chorus** were Chris Dagher, Karen Irwin and Jody Cura.

Members of the deacons group at **Windsor Baptist Church** were Ed Popjoy, chairman; Ed Pyle, vice chairman; Don Anthony, secretary; and Dean Seese, treasurer. And the trustees were Shorty Trego, chairman; Ralph Mertz, vice chairman; John Nagle, secretary; and Elmer Murdoch, treasurer.

Members of **Boy Scout Troop 79**, Glenmoore, who were installed in leadership positions were Brian Harrop, senior leader; and patrol leaders Mark Kottmeyer, Bruce Harrop, Rob Krentel and Jon Hoxter.

Newly elected leaders at **Central Presbyterian Church** were: elders John Staggers, Ernest Stockhoff, Richard Thatcher and John Yurkutat; deacons Walter Kottmeyer, Mary Lynam, Harold Stalder and Douglas Whipple; and trustees Mary Ann Gitzendanner, Jane Klaebel, Anne Pearson and Janet Schucker.

Vicki Geisel won the spelling bee for fifth and sixth graders at **West Bradford School**. Robin McGrady was the runner-up.

The **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's** new committee chairpersons were Earl Myers, government affairs; Lambert McGuckin, membership; John Francella and Dr. Charles Micken, manpower and education; and Jonathan Stott, economic development.

DHS tennis players Erin Conaghan and Steve Ziobro were selected to be ball persons at the U.S. Pro Indoor Championships at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. They also were ball persons for the Virginia Slims Tournament in Philadelphia in March.

Members of the **Alert Fire Co. Auxiliary**, who modeled clothing from Jennie Rae's during their fashion show, were Rose Bruno, Carol Keers, Linda DiLuigi, Kathy Przychodzien and Blanche Dawson.

Scott Lytle, Doug Petrie and Marl Lytle were the team from **Cub Pack 21**, Lionville, which won the Cub Scout National Physical Fitness competition.

Members of the **Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan**, who won awards at the club's arts and crafts show were Mrs. William Edgerton, Mrs. Richard Newman, Mrs. Charles Alfieri and Mrs. Paul TenHoopen.

Coach Bob Boyer's **DHS boys' basketball** team earned their first District I AAA playoff spot by beating Boyertown and Great Valley in the final week of Ches-Mont League play. Bob Dorsey was the Whippets' top scorer in both contests.

West Pikeland's supervisors revealed that they had been in negotiations with Historic Yellow Springs Foundation, whereby the township building on Route 113 would be sold to the foundation, and the township would lease back the building for 99 years. The building, constructed in 1907, was used as school until 1963.

New officers of the **Uwchlan Ambulance Corps** were Cal Wilhelm, president; Mary Ellen Morrissey, vice president; Joan Pladek, corresponding secretary; Lois Norwood, financial secretary; Robert Kochie, treasurer; Ed Milham, operations chief; and trustees James Hart and Donald Dockstader.

Frances Matthews recalled Lionville's past

A two-part feature about Mrs. Frances Matthews' recollections of the Lionville area in the early 20th Century also was published in the *East Branch Citizen* in February 1978. Some of the life-long resident's memories of the village in Uwchlan Township were:

- Lionville High School, established in 1904, was located in several rooms in the Friends Meeting House on Route 113. One teacher taught all the subjects, which included Latin and bookkeeping. In 1918, there were so few students in the high school, the Uwchlan Township School Board decided to put seventh and eighth graders in the high school building. And in the 1920s, the high school curriculum was reduced to two years. Those who wanted to earn a high school diploma went to either Downingtown, which was appealing because Lionville farm boys could major in agriculture there, or to West Chester High School. Lionville High School was closed in 1932 because there was only one student, Gladys McCardell.
- There was little in the way of entertainment in Lionville back then. One attraction was a Lyceum (a Greek term meaning intellectual happening) which was held once a month in the Odd Fellows Hall on Village Avenue. For just a dime, people saw local musicians perform. Also, Paul Dague (later a Congressman from Downingtown) was a popular Lyceum performer. He did impressions of "Uncle Josh," one of the nation's first popular comedians who regaled people with his "silly talk" about people in a mythical farming town, claimed Mrs. Matthews.
- Another major event in the area was the Chautauqua, which came to small communities from New York State for a week in the fall. Different plays and musical entertainment were presented every afternoon and evening; a \$2.50 season ticket enabled one person to go to every performance.
- And many of the women in the village formed a chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Lionville in an attempt to get the Lionville Tavern's liquor license revoked. "Too many husbands were up there drinking," she claimed.
- Although there wasn't much crime in Lionville a century ago, a constable could be called when there was a problem. The constable, a cattle dealer who lived in the village, was not paid, unless someone was fined. So when a kid was caught playing hooky from school, the constable was paid when he went to visit the truant's family.

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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.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@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org. By the way, you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at: www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

It's the Frank Miller Paper Co., predecessor of the Downingtown Paper Co.



Many subscribers claimed that the “What and Where Is This?” photo in last week’s Hist-O-Gram was of the Downingtown Paper Co., or DOPACO or Sonoco, as the firm was known in later years. However, we were looking for a more historically accurate response, which provided information on Downingtown’s largest paperboard manufacturer. So, no one correctly identified the photo shown above as the Frank Miller Paper Co.

The photo was in the center of a postcard, which included a border surrounding all four sides of the picture. And on the bottom part of the frame was printed, “F. F. Miller Paper Co., first mill, Downingtown, PA. Largest box board mill in the US.”

A digital copy of the postcard was sent to us by Doug Bennett, retired DHS band director and music teacher, who lives with his wife in Charlotte, NC.

Frank Miller started papermaking 1881, when he began manufacturing binder board for bookbinders in a mill that was a mile south of the borough, according to a booklet, entitled “A Tradition of People and Paper,” which was published in 1956, on Downingtown Paper Co.’s 75th anniversary. Since he had to haul raw materials and the finished product one mile to and from a rail station, Miller bought a 14-acre tract on Brandywine Avenue in Downingtown in 1887, which was near the Pennsylvania Railroad’s main line. The mill he built there was one of the first to be run entirely by steam. A year later, a paperboard machine was added to mill’s equipment.

And when he needed money to expand the operation in 1891, Miller turned to his brother-in-law, Gibson McIlvain. Subsequently, the McIlvain family became actively involved in the company.

The firm was renamed the Downingtown Paper Co. in 1924.

It's at 230 Fairview Road in Glenmoore



Russ Faller is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as the house at 230 Fairview Road in Wallace Township. Built in 1907, it was the summer residence of William Montgomery, a prominent Philadelphia attorney. In the 1970s, it became the Vitae House for recovering alcoholics, and later became a rehabilitation facility for drug addicts, based on materials provided by Wallace Township historian Sandy Brannan. In recent years, it was reconverted into a residence. For more details on the 76-acre estate, see: www.trulia.com/property/3115523699-230-Fairview-Rd-Glenmoore-PA-19343.

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

Lecture series

The East Brandywine Township Historical Commission will kick off a monthly lecture series on Sundays, at 3:30 PM, with a discussion at the township building on Feb. 23 about the Downingtown Industrial and Agricultural School. It will be followed by a lecture on the Bondsville Mill on March 30. The third lecture, on East Brandywine Baptist, will be held at the church on April 27.

Program on Lincoln

At 6:30 PM, Wednesday, Feb. 12, Deb Pieri will talk about "The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln" at the Downingtown Library, 330 E. Lancaster Ave.

Book sale

Donations of books (hardbacks and softbacks in good condition only) will be accepted until Monday, Feb. 10 for the Downingtown Library's Spring Book Sale, which will be held from 6-7:30 PM Friday, March 7, and from 9 AM to 4 PM Saturday, March 8. For more info, call the library at 610-269-2741.

Food Fight

The Thorndale Rotary Club has challenged the Coatesville Rotary Club to a food fight. The clubs are competing to collect the most non-perishable food goods through March 1. All donations can be delivered to the West Bradford Township Building, 1385 Campus Drive, during normal business hours, 7 AM to 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday.

All items collected will be delivered to the Chester County Food Bank, to benefit families in need throughout our local communities.

The Cupboard's food supply runs low every March. Your generosity will help feed hundreds of hungry families during this critical time of year.

These high-priority items that are always in short supply: canned tuna, macaroni and cheese, canned pasta, canned beef stew, chili and soups, canned fruits & vegetables, and cold and hot breakfast cereals. Please consider adding an extra item or two to your weekly shopping list.

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.

Downingtown Farmers' Market

The Downingtown Farmers' Market will be open over the winter months on the following Thursdays: Feb. 20, March 6 and 20, and April 3 and 17, at the Williamson Masonic Hall; 210 Manor Ave., Downingtown, from 4 - 6 PM. 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.

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