



Downingtown Area Historical Society

Hist-O-Gram

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downtowntownareahistoricalociety.org

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

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July 10, 2014

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the house in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Send your responses to: Info@downtowntownareahistoricalociety.org.

Interesting local news published 36 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* in the early part of July 1978.

The top four finishers among the 38 canoe entrants in the eighth annual **canoe race** (were: Walter Werner and Chuck Hendricks, first; Bill James and Ray Hagele second; Hank and Doug Hamilton, third; and Bruce and Keith Liebert, fourth. The 7.5-mile race down the Brandywine started at Kerr Park and ended at Georgia Farm in East Bradford.

(Editor's Note: The canoe race was established by the Downingtown Jaycees in the early 1970s. Then it was taken over in the late 1970s by the Downingtown Rotary Club, which continued that responsibility for decades. The race was folded into Good Neighbor Day, which was launched in 1979.)

East Caln supervisors agreed to investigate the possibility of contracting with Downingtown or Uwchlan to provide police protection. About eight months earlier, state trooper Gene Biagiotti candidly acknowledged at a supervisors' meeting that a police presence would do little to reduce crime in the township.

Some of the star kickballers in the Downingtown-Uwchlan Recreation Commission's summer program at the **Lionville School** playground were Patty Welch, Kevin Traynor, Doug Kaiser, Joey and Lori Boyce, Danny Miller, Sharon Lynch, Joe Pancerella, Mike Strong, and Steve Knickerbocker. And top performers in the ring toss at the **Beaver Creek** playground were Joshua and Chris Tyson, Robert Wagner and Chris Schuhardt. Best Frisbee tossers at **East Ward** playground were Andrew Ploeger, Pat and John Borst, Beverly Eldridge, Shannon Boggs, and Laurie and Beverly Myers.

Members of the **Downingtown Little League's** major league (11 and 12-year-olds) all-star team were Tom McCool, Butch Schucker, Robbie Smith, Joey Rainey, Jack Oberle, Bobby Sarmento, George Hipple, Brian Wemmett, Rollie Boyle, Marc Ruggiano, Vernon Murphy, Wally McCue, Jeff Williams and Roger White. The team was coached by Danny Massimini and Ed Cooney.

Local people who received Outstanding Volunteer Awards from **Little League** District 23 administrator Tony Marra were Ron Savastio and Frank DiOttavio, Downingtown Little League, and Paul Seymour, Lionville Youth Association.

Named to the major league all-star team of the **Girls LYA Softball League** were Tina Marx, Julie and Amy Sten, Ashley Melton, Sondra Schrade, Melanie Wix, Barrie Benjamin, Bonnie McKee, Betty Tiller, Dina Repp, Nancy Davison, Bonnie Bull and Margie McQuillin.

Recent **property transfers** included: 42 Highland Ave., Downingtown, \$48,500; 223 Biddle Drive, Uwchlan, \$68,900; 1259 Glenside Road, West Bradford, \$57,000; 14 Windmere Court, East Brandywine, \$42,900; 101 Cheryl Drive, Upper Uwchlan, \$57,900; 482 Fairview Road, Wallace, \$82,000.

Members of **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville, celebrated its 140th anniversary by breaking ground for a new church.

Committee chairpersons for the **DHS Alumni Association's** picnic at Kerr Park were Turie Hayes, Mary Mahan, Nicky Anderson, Eloise Sigle, Hazel Miller, Virginia Elliott, Helen Eachus, Gladys and Tom Brookover, Duke Charles, Ed and Sue McDermott, Howard Fitzgerald, Bill Mason, Joe Bird, Cliff Ivey, Elma Miller, Jerry Matthews and Francis Summers.

Becky Messa broke several Brandywine Swim League records in the 12 and under competition, as Pennypacker Country Club won its first two meets of the season.

Members of the **Downingtown Babe Ruth League's** 14-15 year olds all-star team were Ted Ortiz, Don Forbes, Ron Sheridan, Scott Evans, Mike Diamond, Eric Presson, Mike Lynch, Dan Dougherty, Doug Runyen, Bob Trauger, Rick Dunn, Mark Ciarlone, Larry Protivnak, Vince Forgione, Jay McNeil and Dave Hammer. Pat Murphy was the manager, and Rick Ciarlone was the assistant manager.

Newly installed officers of the **Downingtown Rotary Club** were: Millard Ryan, president; Dr. Joseph McCahon, first vice president; Richard Thatcher, second vice president; Lewis Wilson, treasurer; Jack Bonham, secretary; David Kirkner, assistant treasurer; and directors Rev. Richard Wolfe, Bob Schafer, Frank Brouse and Bill Mason.

Rose Castaldi provides history of DiLuigi's Shoe Repair Shop

In the July 3 Hist-O-Gram, we showed a photo of Mike DiLuigi holding a 1930s vintage baseball uniform that was worn by members of the team sponsored by DiLuigi's Shoe Repair Shop, which Mike donated to the Historical Society. And we asked readers of last week's Hist-O-Gram if any of them had any info about DiLuigi's Shoe Repair Shop. Well, Rose Formica Castaldi came to our rescue, and provided this bit of local history:

DiLuigi's Shoe Repair Shop was located on what is now the parking lot of the DNBFirst Bank. Close to it was the Travaglini Tailor Shop and then The Methodist Church. My brother, Anthony "Ninny" Formica, started to work for Vince "Biangi" Di Luigi, when he was 12 years old and learned from him, the trade, to become a master shoemaker. When Biangi retired, he sold the business to Ninny. Thus, the start of Ninny's Shoe Shop on West Lancaster Avenue came about. When Ninny retired, his son Brian took over, and he operated it until several years ago.

We always liked having our shoes repaired, as they were shiny and you did not have to break them in, as a new pair.

Also, Michael DiLuigi's dad, Anthony, had a shoe store, located where a part of First Niagara Bank is now located. The store was known as DiLuigi' Shoes, a family store that sold men's, women's and children's shoes and boots. A good pair of women's shoes sold from \$3.95 to \$5.95, and kids' shoes were \$2.95 to \$3.95. This I know, because I worked there for seven years.

You had to pay to attend DHS commencement in 1894

Here are some more goodies we retrieved from late 19th Century editions of *The Archive*, a Downingtown weekly newspaper:

1. According to the May 26, 1894 edition of *The Downingtown Archive*, only two students—Louisa Huber and Joseph Laird—graduated from Downingtown High School in 1894, which wasn't unusual back then.

Despite the tiny number of graduates, there was no skimping on the commencement, which included several orations, recitations and addresses, as well as musical selections played by an orchestra brought in from West Chester.

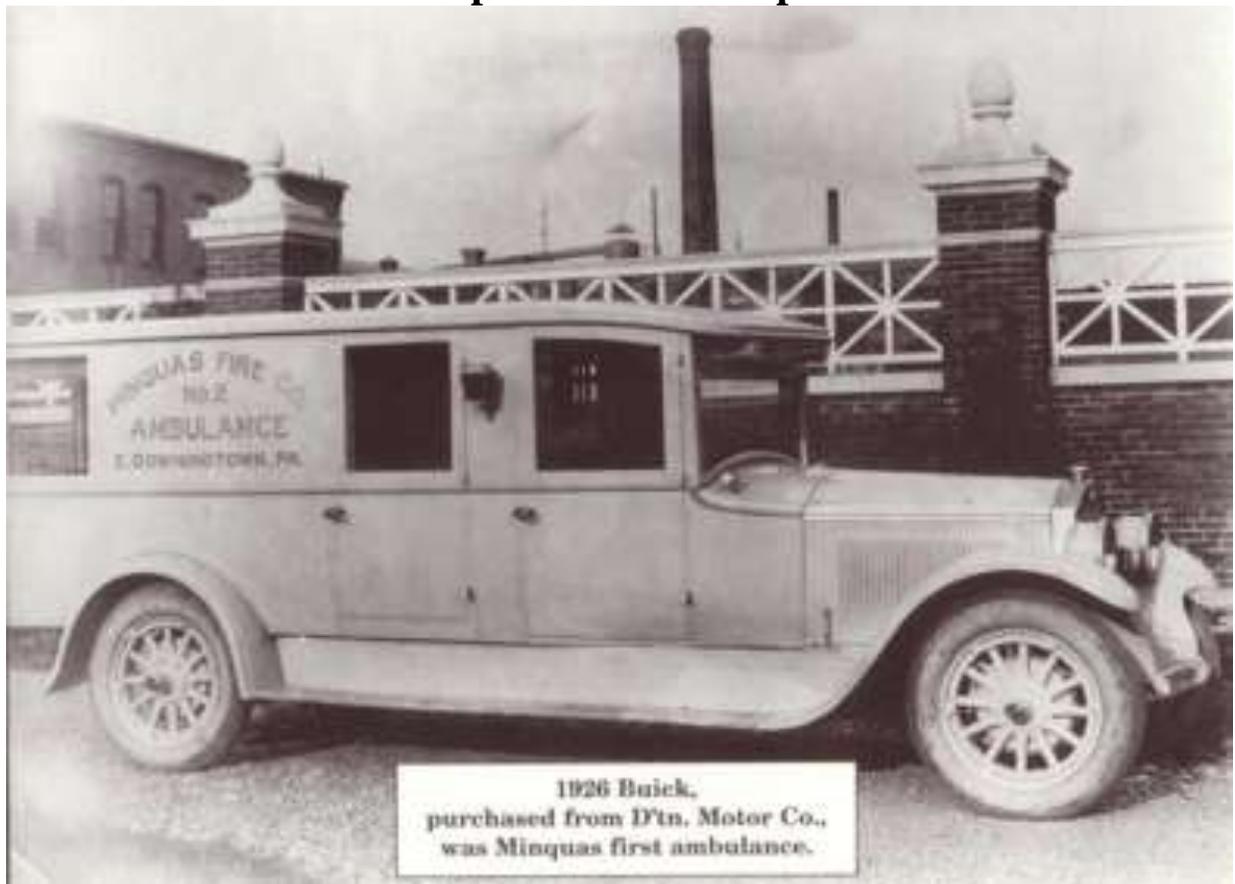
The commencement was conducted in Central Hall, next door to the borough's Central School, which included grades 1 through 12 in the former Institute Building on West Lancaster Avenue, near where the current Messiah Lutheran Church is located.

Central Hall was constructed in 1860 for the First Presbyterian Church, which disbanded during the Civil War. Subsequently, the former church building became Central Hall, where itinerant entertainment, wrestling matches were held. In 1902, Central Hall was converted into the original Messiah Lutheran Church.

The most interesting part of commencement exercise was that there was a 25-cent admission fee. In today's money, that would be about \$4 per ticket. Despite the fee and the small graduating class, Central Hall "was crowded with intelligent and appreciative people," crowed *The Archive*.

2. Wonder what people could buy for 25 cents in Downingtown in 1984? According to an ad in the June 23, 1894 issue of *The Archive*, for the Howard Simmons' store, located at the corner of Church Street and Bradford Avenue in the Johnstown section of the borough, here's what you could get for a quarter back then: 4 packages of corn starch, 3 "good" mackerel, 5 lbs. of rice, 8 bars of soap, 1 lb. of butter, 2 cans of salmon, 1 gal. of molasses, and 1 gal. of vinegar.

Area residents were transported to the hospital in a 1926 ambulance



Proceeds from Downingtown's Good Neighbor Day celebration have been donated to local ambulance corps and rescue squads for 35 years. But if Downingtown area residents had to be transported to the hospital in the late 1920s, they probably would have been taken to the hospital in the Minquas Fire Company's 1926 Buick ambulance pictured above.

We're looking for RNs who served in the military

The Historical Society wishes to conduct a Veterans Program that focuses on registered nurses from the Downingtown area who served in the military during the Korean Conflict, Viet Nam, Iraq or Afghanistan. Participants will be on a panel, comprised of former military nurses who will tell an audience of local residents about their wartime experiences. We plan to offer the program on a Sunday afternoon in September or October at a public venue.

Former military nurses, or if you know someone who is, interested in this Veterans Program, should contact us at Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org, or call Parry Desmond at 610-269-8037.

No, they're not the Bobsey Twins



Linda Draper is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify the guys in the photo above as Ron Dankanich, left, and Dr. Mario Spoto, right. The dynamic duo is part of local history because they have been emceeing the Good Neighbor Day events at Kerr Park for more than 30 years. Thanks guys.

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. And you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at: www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. If you want to send us information or make a comment, contact us at: Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org.

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 and Phil Dague.

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

Uwchlan's Community Day

Uwchlan Township's 17th annual Community Day will begin at the Lionville Fire Co. on South Village Avenue at 9 AM Saturday, July 12 with the David J. Good Run & Walk. And starting at 4 PM, at Lionville Park, 34 Devon Drive, there will be free games and activities for kids, and musical entertainment.

Swinging Summer Saturday

The Downingtown Main Street Association will have street festival from 5 PM to 10 PM on Saturday, August 9 on Wallace Avenue, between Lancaster and Pennsylvania Avenues in Downingtown. Local crafts people, restaurants and businesses that wish to participate should contact: manager@downingtownmainstreet.com for booth space applications and more details.

Life in the 1850s & 1860s

Costumed re-enactors will demonstrate period crafts and trades, and talk about life in the 1850s and 1860s from 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, July 19 at the Mill at Anselma, a National Historic Landmark, at 1730 Conestoga Road, Chester Springs.

Bats for Matt

The Bats for Matt Softball Tournament will be held at the Downingtown Little League field on Manor Avenue, Saturday, July, 19 and Sunday, July 20. Info on teams must be submitted before July 14 to: BigCiarlone@gmail.com or Krazzielazzie224@yahoo.com. See <http://batsformatt.com/> for more details.

DHS Class of 1964 reunion

Reservations for the DHS Class of 1964's 50th reunion are due by **July 31 (new deadline)**. The reunion will be held 6-11 PM at St. Anthony's Lodge on Saturday, Sept. 27. Cost is \$50 per person. As part of the reunion, the class plans to have a float in the Homecoming Parade on Thursday evening, Sept. 15, and attend the Homecoming Game on Friday night, Oct. 17. For more information see: <http://dhsclassof64.org/> or contact Judi (Grubb) Supplee via jsupplee@x-coretechnologies.com or call 610-220-6138.

Chicken BBQ

The Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 West Strasburg Road, will host a Chicken BBQ dinner on Saturday, July 26. The menu includes BBQ chicken (leg/thigh), cole slaw, corn on the cob, baked beans, roll & butter, dessert, and a beverage. Hours for the "Eat-in" or "Take-out" option are from 4:30 to 6 PM. Cost is \$10/adult and \$5/child (5 to 12 years of age). Contact the church office at 610-696-5247 or via office@marshalltonchurch.org.

Downingtown Library activities & events

The monthly giving program of Bob Wagner's Flooring America is supporting the Downingtown Library in July. All participants are asked to take a picture of their favorite book cover and email it, with your name and snail mail address, to: media@bobwagner.com. For every book cover received by Bob Wagner's, they will donate \$1 to the Downingtown Library. Also, Bob Wagner's will randomly select one book cover photo from those received each week in July and contribute an additional \$5 in that person's name to the Library.

Entries are limited to five photos per email address and/or social user.

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 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: JPC Cheryl@verizon.net.