



## Downingtown Area Historical Society **Hist-O-Gram**

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

[www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org)

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## Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the site, shown above, will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to: [Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

## Local news originally published 52 years ago

The following items were published in local newspapers in the early part of July 1962:

**Fire destroyed a historic, frame building**, which was used by Good News Productions Inc. in West Pikeland, to produce the classic horror film, *The Blob*, starring Steve McQueen. Constructed in 1869, the building had been the Chester Springs Soldiers' and Orphans Home. It also was used, from 1917 until 1952, by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts to conduct art classes in the summertime.

A proposal to build apartments in the Gable Avenue neighborhood in **Downingtown** was shot down by Borough Council because that area was zoned for single dwellings, and some 250 West Ward residents signed a petition against changing the zoning.

Winners in competitive games for youngsters on **Good Neighbor Day**, sponsored by the Downingtown Optimists Club on the Fourth of July, included Joseph and Stephen Horsey, Diane and Brenda Henderson, Dale Wemett, Gordon James, George Wilson and David Stott. Adult game winners were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Beam, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lyons, and Mrs. Mrs. Glen Echhoff. Mrs. Helen Burkhart won the cake baking competition.

The **Downingtown Optimists Club** bought and refurbished the old Railway Express building, which had been located for many years at the Downingtown Railroad Station, and moved it to Kerr Park, where Boy Scouts could store the old newspapers they collected. Members of the Optimists also had built a "cook-out" structure, to be used by the public in Kerr Park.

Members of the **Marshallton Girl Scout Troop**, who participated in a cook-out and sleep-over on the Fowler farm, were Connie and Janet Rissell, Jane Nordblom, Patty Hoxter, Donna Yetter, Joyce Watson, Suzanne Jones, Darlene Judy, Gale Morrison, Susan Durnall and Gale Collins.

Those who participated in the closing exercises of the Vacation Bible School at **Glenmoore Methodist Church**, directed by Mrs. Grier Miller, were accompanist Sherry Massimini, flag bearers Mary Ann Moore and Kathy Ayers, and Bible carrier Robert Ferguson.

Ninth graders who received diplomas for completing **Hopewell Methodist Church's** Vacation Bible School included: Donald Ash, Cheryl and Dallas Krapf, Linda Laird, Roy Nellius, Barry Piersol, James Sanders, Janet Seeds, Patty Whitely and Danny Yost.

These members of the Downingtown chapter, **Women of the Moose**, were installed as officers: Mrs. Thomas Moffat, graduate regent; Mrs. Robert Moore, junior regent; Mrs. Byron Dawson, chaplain; Mrs. Ashton Lammey, recorder; Mrs. Willard Marsh, treasurer; Mrs. Dale Eber, guide; Mrs. Robert Norris, assistant guide; Mrs. John Robinson, sentinel; Mrs. Daniel Zittle, argus; Mrs. Blanche Summers, pianist; and Mrs. Edward Robinson, senior regent.

Members of **Boy Scout Troop 83**, Lionville, who spent a week at Camp Horseshoe, were John Barton, Stephen and William Behrnt, Dale Coover, James Dewees, Clair Koser, Roger Lackey, Francis Parisan, David Peterson, Peter Plank, Harry Rauch Jr., James Rice, Thomas Shreiner, Robert Worthington, James Young, James Wunsch, and Andrew Parsons.

Members of **Cub Pack 79**, Glenmoore, who participated in the seventh annual Cubolympics, held at Devereux School, were Harold and Allen Earnshaw, David Funk, David Taylor, Harvey Roeder, Gregory Hannum, Pat Corry, Gene Arters, James Ortlip, Louis Waldmann, Carl Shrader, Ray Chilcote, Danny and Michael Messner, Scott Herter, Chuck Keesey, Carl Harple, Alan Colestock and Jesse Baker.

## When most of the Downingtown area was rural

With the exception of the Borough of Downingtown, most of the communities that now comprise the Downingtown School District were rural villages surrounded by farm land. To provide a more accurate picture of the area, noted below is a breakdown of the populations—1930 vs. 2010 Census—of the eight municipalities which make up the School District. Obviously, all of the communities have experienced growth since 2010.

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>1930 Pop.</u>	<u>2010 Pop.</u>
Downingtown	4,548	7,891
East Brandywine	774	6,742
East Caln	297	4,838
Uwchlan	507	18,088
Upper Uwchlan	597	11,227
Wallace	630	3,458
West Bradford	1,558	12,376
West Pikeland	592	4,824

## Contributions to new Downingtown Library project

The Downingtown Library has received one-time donations of money or in-kind gifts of at least \$10,000 from Downingtown Borough and East Brandywine, East Caln, Uwchlan and West Bradford Townships. The donations will be used for the purchase and renovation of the Downingtown School District's former Micken building, which will be the site of the new library at 122 Wallace Avenue in the heart of Downingtown.

## The General Warren Inne: A historic road back to delicious

Here's another restaurant write-up by Karen Meacham. She and her husband, Ron, won the grand prize—meals at 12 Downingtown area restaurants—in the “A Taste of Chester County” restaurant raffle, conducted by the Historical Society last fall.

*The General Warren Inne in Malvern, opened in 1745. Back then, it was known as The Admiral Edward Vernon Inne, and later became The Admiral Warren Inne. John Penn, grandson of William, owned the Inne during the American Revolution. Loyalists to the British crown gathered at the Inne, and hatched several plots against the revolutionaries including the Paoli Massacre. In 1786, John Penn sold the property to Casper Fahnestock, a German Seventh Day Adventist, who kept it as a successful lodge and eatery, and changed its name to The General Warren Inne in 1825. During the 1830's, the Inne fell on hard times when the railroad replaced stage coaches and the carriage trade, and Fahnestock turned it into a Temperance Hotel The*

*Inne changed hands often, including a stint as a private residence. In the 1980's, the current owners returned it to its 18<sup>th</sup> century beauty.*

*Our dining experience started with uniquely prepared lobster flatbread with mushroom, peppers and bacon in a Dijon-tarragon sauce; pan seared scallops with roasted peaches, watercress, goat cheese, pomegranate and spiced cashews; baked Gruyere puffs made with white truffle oil, sea salt and shaved locatelle, and Rhode Island oysters.*

*The enticing entrées selected were the special grouper plate and Long Island duck, both served with truffled lentils and a variety of complementary sauces. The caesar salad was perfectly prepared at our table, an uncommon treat. Dessert consisted of pineapple upside down cake and lemon crumble tart. We topped off our meals with a mix of coffee and cappuccino. Service was efficient and pleasant, complemented by a dose of Irish humor.*

*The General Warren Inne provides excellent continental cuisine, fine wines and, if you so desire, overnight stays. We want to thank The General Warren Inne for their gracious donation to the Downingtown Area Historical Society's "A Taste of Chester County" fundraiser.*

## **It's at 103 Shoen Road in Exton**



Kim Collins is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify the house in the photo above as 103 Shoen Road in Exton. The original part of the house was built in 1821. For more info, see: [www.trulia.com/property/3130718530-103-Shoen-Rd-Exton-PA-19341](http://www.trulia.com/property/3130718530-103-Shoen-Rd-Exton-PA-19341).

## **Focus on Blizzard of 1888 may offer relief from heat**

Instead of focusing on the inevitable hot, humid weather we'll have to endure in the coming months, maybe we can find some relief by learning about how the Downingtown area coped with the legendary Blizzard of 1888.

According to stories in the March 17, 1888 edition of the *Chester County Archive*, a weekly newspaper published in Downingtown in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the snow on Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown was 4 feet deep. It took several days for a "force of men," temporarily hired by borough's Street Committee, to use shovels to clear Downingtown's main thoroughfare. And many of the passenger and freight trains scheduled to stop in Downingtown didn't arrive in the borough for days because they were blocked by huge snow drifts en route, or the tracks were impassable due to fallen utility poles and power and telegraph lines, which had been downed by fierce winds and the mounting snow.

Yes, the Downingtown area, like the rest of the East Coast, was overwhelmed by the four-day snowstorm in mid-March 1888. But as Mary Cable noted in her book, *The Blizzard of 1888*, the storm was historically important because it illuminated how America's newly industrialized communities of all sizes had become dependent on new technologies such as electricity and telephone and telegraph service. And residents of small towns, as well as big cities, were shocked when they realized that Mother Nature had temporarily blown all that progress away.

## **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](http://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. And you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at: [www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.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](mailto: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**

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# **Free ads for Non-Profits**

## ***Good Neighbor Day***

The Downingtown Good Neighbor Day Committee's activities benefit the following ambulance and rescue squads: Alert Fire Co., Minquas Ambulance Corps, Uwchlan Ambulance Corps, East Brandywine Fire Co., Glenmoore Fire Co. and West Bradford Fire Co. Good Neighbor Day is a day-long event that starts with the Run for Life (5K, 10K & 15K) and 5K Freedom Walk at 8 AM. Approximately 1,500 athletes participate each year. Throughout the day you can enjoy fabulous food, visit 80-100 craft exhibitors or simply enjoy one of the many activities scheduled for the day. For details, see:

[www.goodneighborday.com/events-schedule/](http://www.goodneighborday.com/events-schedule/). The day is capped off with a fireworks finale at dusk.

## ***DHS Class of 1964 reunion***

Reservations for the DHS Class of 1964's 50<sup>th</sup> reunion are due by June 30. 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. 25, and attend the Homecoming Game on Friday night, Sept. 26. For more information see: <http://dhsclassof64.org/> or contact Judi (Grubb) Supplee via [jsupplee@x-coretechnologies.com](mailto:jsupplee@x-coretechnologies.com) or call 610-220-6138.

## ***Downingtown Library activities & events***

Summer Reading Club: Stop in the library to register for our Summer Reading Club. There are clubs for kids, teens, and adults. This summer's theme is Fizz, Boom, Read!

Science in the Summer program runs from June 30 through July 3. Level 1 (children entering first and second grades) will run 1:45-2:45 PM, and Level 2 (children entering third, fourth and fifth grades) will run 3-4 PM. Registration on a first-come, first-served basis; 16 children will be accepted on each level.

For more info on activities and events, call 610-269-2741.

## ***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](http://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](http://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](mailto:JPCheryl@verizon.net).