



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

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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.

Local news originally published 52 years ago

The following news items were originally published by local newspapers in the early part of June 1962.

With 137 seniors, DHS had its largest **graduating class**. Officers of the Class of 1962 were Ed McDermott, president; Jim Yamshak, vice president; Joyce Stern, secretary; and Lynn Barron, treasurer. The class's honor students were Lynn Barron, Elizabeth Kelly, William Meroney, James Pillagalli, Marie Pollock, Joanna Pope, Mark Shrader, Helen Simmons, Donna Thompson, Paula Tweed and Stephen Wilson. Award and scholarship winners included: Lynn Barron and Robert Shank, DHS Alumni Assn.; and Donna Thompson, Downingtown Area

Education Assn. Following the commencement, a dance for the new grads was held at St. Anthony's Lodge.

Forty eighth graders graduated from **St. Joseph's Catholic School**. Awards given at commencement included Nancy Cassel and George Hilton, highest general averages; Timothy Terramin, Outstanding Catholic Boy; and Theresa Dougherty, Outstanding Catholic Girl;

Cubmaster Joseph Fennelly presented pins to Mark Dreibelbis, Marlon Brubaker and Steve Massimini, who are members of **Cub Pack 2**. Those who earned badges were Joel Swisher, Eric Dreibelbis, Jimmy Jenkins, James Conner, Frank Bishop, Jimmy Fenelly, Jack Wasmuth, Stuart Pollock, Jack Leonard, Larry Patrizio, Palmer Raysor and David Radcliffe.

Members of the safety patrol at **Brandywine Wallace School** who were taken to a Phillies game included Irwin Williamson, Chris Pierson, Richard Haas, John Pollock, Fred Swavely, Shirley Sorenson and Dennis Davidson. Directors of the school's Savings Stamp program—Mrs. Jay Lammey, Mrs. Thomas Peazzoni and Mrs. Edwin Johnson—reported that over \$2,500 in stamps and savings bonds had been purchased by students. New officers of the school's PTA were William Wilson, president; Gerald Whiteman, vice president; Shirley Fetters, treasurer; and Mrs. Edwin Johnson.

Officers installed to lead the **Marshallton PTA** were Mrs. Joseph Fell, president; Mrs. Joseph Kirkner, vice president; Mrs. Charles Case, secretary; and Mrs. Warren Rissell, treasurer.

Mrs. Edward Robinson was elected senior regent of the **Women of the Moose** in Downingtown. Also elected were Mrs. Robert Moore, junior regent; Mrs. Thomas Moffatt, junior graduate regent; Mrs. Byron Dawson, chaplain; Mrs. Ashton Lammey, recorder; and Mrs. Willard Marsh, treasurer.

Mrs. Belle Murray was elected president of the **American Legion Auxiliary** in Downingtown. Others elected were Mrs. William Keen, vice president; Mrs. Paul McCombs, second vice president; Mrs. Earl Thornton, treasurer; Mrs. Paul Dague, secretary; Esther Williams, historian; Anna Dougherty, chaplain; and Mrs. Alford Nichols, sergeant-at-arms.

The staff of the Vacation Bible School at **Central Presbyterian Church** included Jane Bierley, kindergarten group; Betty Buckwalter, primary group; Jane Mitman, junior group; and Mrs. Leo Hamilton, coordinator.

Girl Scout Troop 83 conducted a fly-up. Girls who were promoted from Brownies were Brenda Joyce Murphy, Grace DiBerardinis, Rosemary Gazzerro, Susan Mento and Kitty Martin.

Kids who participated in a contest at **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, so they could earn \$25 each toward a week at a Christian camp, were Doug Habecker, Donna Peterman, Janet and Thomas Haas, Judy and Diane Shirk, Turie Hayes, Gilbert Cox, Joy Emery and Sandra Mattison.

Newly elected officers of the **Pickering Valley Woman's Club** were Mrs. Frank Gottier, president; Mrs. Forrest Gottier, vice president; Mrs. James Summers, recording secretary; Mrs. Ralph Emery, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Robert Fetters, treasurer. The nominating committee was comprised of Mrs. Samuel Acker, Mrs. Jacob Dewees and Mrs. Kenneth Wheatley.

Officers elected to lead the **Ladies of St. Joseph's Catholic Church** were Mrs. Philip Lyons, president; Mrs. Joseph Driscoll, vice president; Mrs. Ernest Panetti, secretary; Mrs. Charles Snyder, secretary; and Mrs. Josephina Valentino, treasurer.

DHS Class of 1932 photo, taken in their junior year



This photo of the DHS Class of 1932, taken in their junior year, was one of the items Thomas Brookover saved from his youth. That's him, wearing glasses, in the middle of the three guys pictured in the upper left hand corner.

Donations include 1932 graduation articles from *The Archive*

Tom and Bill Brookover recently donated numerous printed materials to the Historical Society. Among those items, collected by their father, Thomas Brookover, was a copy of the June 2, 1932 edition of *The Downingtown News*, a weekly newspaper, which competed with *The Archive* in the Downingtown area for several years. A prominent citizen, the elder Brookover was an executive for the Downingtown Paper Co. and served on the school board for many years.

The lead story in that week's issue was about 64 students graduating from DHS in 1932. That was the last class to complete their high school years in the building (opened in 1910; later known as the West Ward School) on West Lancaster Avenue. The following year, the Junior High and Senior High students attended the new school on Manor Avenue, which now is the STEM Academy.

The article noted that the two-day ceremonial process started with the 50th annual Class Day, which drew a capacity crowd to the Roosevelt Theatre on Brandywine Avenue on the evening before the next night's commencement. It included a reading of the class's history and passing of the Senior Mantle robe on to Donald Schultz, Class of 1933 president.

And advancement exercises for grammar school students were conducted in the high school auditorium the night after the commencement.

The five students in the class who had the highest, four-year, academic average were: Mary Bareford, 3.97; Thomas Brookover, 3.90; Lillian Bareford, 3.896; Virginia McMichael, 3.892; and Charles Elston, 3.71.

It was noted in the story that members of the class had decorated the grave of classmate Edwin Mendenhall, who had died in a plane crash near Marshallton on August 9, 1931.

According to the 1932 *Cuckoo* (the DHS yearbook's title back then), the class colors were old rose and grey, since the concept of school colors (e.g. blue and gold) had yet to evolve. And revenues realized from a bake sale, two dances and the senior class play—also offered at the Roosevelt Theatre—were used to defray the costs of the class trip to Washington, DC.

That week's *Archive* also included:

- An ad for Charles Furlong's grocery store at Jefferson Avenue and Chestnut Street in Downingtown. Specials were: a 5-pound bag of sugar, 19 cents; center-cut pork chops, 23 cents a pound; 12 pounds of "pastry" flour, 27 cents; and a 2-gallon can of motor oil, 98 cents.

- Ninety children received their First Communion at St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

- Members of the East Brandywine School Board and the Guthriesville High School teachers held a surprise reception for Victor Jochen, the school's principal, and his unnamed, new bride. After George North, school board president, extended greetings, Hazel Laird sang several songs, accompanied by pianist Mrs. Francis Helm. Then a play—starring Mrs. Joseph Harner, Mrs. Wayne Gray and Ernest Philips—was put on.

- Downingtown's baseball team, which played in the Chester County League, had new uniforms. The backs of the new togs included the names of the firms and businesses which donated money to buy the uniforms. The donors were Charles Walker, coal and lumber; Swan Hotel; Deputy's Barber Shop; Chandler Roberts, insurance; Edward McClure, Motor Service Co; Clarence Miller, barber; Lineinger's coal yard; the Downingtown News; Ray Sheeler, Wallace Motors; James Grassie, Ford dealer; Loyal Order of the Moose; Morris Steifel, Roosevelt Theatre; Groff's News Agency; and Hope's Garage.

- Samuel Banghart, sole surviving member of the Downingtown's GAR Post for Civil War vets; 10 Spanish-American War vets; the Charles F. Moran American Legion Post and the American Legion Auxiliary were the honored guests at the Memorial Day service at Downingtown Methodist Church.

- Children who sold more than 1,000 poppies for the American Legion Auxiliary were honored for their efforts. First prize, a pen and pencil set, for selling the most poppies went to Mary Louise Sheehan. A fountain pen, second prize, was given to Betty Baen, and a 1-pound box of candy, third prize, was won by Betty Forbes.

- Free physical exams were done on 26 pre-school children by local physicians and dentists. The turnout was a little low because some kids had been quarantined with chicken pox or whooping cough. Nurses who assisted with the exams were Lillie Finn, Ruth John, Jane Guthrie Davison and Louella Rimel.

- There was an ad for the next month's Welfare Carnival (during the Depression era), sponsored by the American Legion and the Downingtown Lions Club.

- The American Legion sponsored the first annual Field Day at Kerr Park. Over 100 boys competed in the track and field events, which were supervised by DHS coaches Francis Tweed and William McAlpine. John Moyer and Lawrence Haas were standouts in their divisions.

Items from the *West Ward School News* in 1947

Among the many neat items Mike Mento recently donated to the Historical Society was the May 28, 1947 edition of the *West Ward School News*. Tidbits from that issue included:

- Fifth and sixth graders who starred in the operetta “Taffy Ann” included Dottie Kipp, Bill Bousum, Doris Cox, Clinton Law, Jo Ann Forbes, Nelson Walton, Francis Petrella, Nancy Brookover, Fay Bousum, Bob Goudie, Frank Manetta, Shirley Kay, John Shoemaker, Connie Hamilton, Patty Stringer and Helen Jane Henry.

- Officers of the school’s Mothers Club were Mrs. Clinton Law, president; Mrs. Francis Tweed, vice president; Mrs. Edward Towson, secretary; and Mrs. Herbert Ash, treasurer.

- Fourth graders who earned good penmanship certificates were Doris Katherman, Eileen Higgins, George Forbes, Sue Towers, Sally Johnson, Louise DiPietro, Patty Sciarretta, Helen Spence and Claudette Rimel.

- Those who didn’t miss a day of school that year were Ralph Dunmore, Tommy Hughes, Janet Bowman, Gerald Cozzone, Philomena DiBerardinis, Joan Hughes, Kathleen D’Attilio, Anthony Malone, George Coulter, Theresa Ciarlone, Charlotte DiGiovantonio, Dorothy Kipp, Charles Campbell, Raymond Thompson, Annabelle Warnick, Charles Wagner, Jack Francella, Barbara Wilkinson, Geraldine Butcher, Herbert Lee, Roy Hummel and Jean Mercer.

Commuting to and from Philadelphia by train in 1869

Back in 1869, the Chester Valley Railroad offered commuter service between Philadelphia and Downingtown, according to an article by Robert Geasey, in the July 2000 edition of the *History Quarterly*, published by the Tredyffrin Easttown Historical Society.

Commuting by rail meant you were in for a long day, but travelling to and from Philadelphia in one day, by horse and buggy, 145 years ago wasn’t a piece of cake either.

Geasey wrote: “Business was fairly good. A schedule from 1869 shows three trains a day, each direction, between Philadelphia and Downingtown, with 16 stops along the way. A single passenger train left Downingtown at 6 AM, returning from Philadelphia at 4:30 PM, clearly a commuter train. In fact, the schedule advertises commutation, school and excursion tickets at reduced rates. The travel time was 2-1/2 hours. Perhaps this was the start of suburban living in the Great Valley?”

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. And you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at: 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.**

Detailed maps of Chester County communities in 1883

If you're interested in seeing late 19th Century maps of boroughs and townships in Chester County, check out http://ancestortracks.com/Chester_resources.html, which provides *Breou's Official Series of Farm Maps, Chester County*, published by W.H. Kirk in 1883.

It's on the Devereux School campus on Boot Road in East Caln



Rahn Brackin is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above (taken by Mike Dunn) as one of the buildings on the campus of the Devereux School at 600 Boot Road in East Caln Township.

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

Farmers Market

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

Flower Sale

Marshalltown United Methodist Church's Men's Flower Sale will begin Friday, May 9 and will continue through Wednesday, May 28. The church is located at 1282 W. Strasburg Road, Marshallton. Hours are 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Saturday. The sale will feature large hanging baskets, annuals, geraniums, climbing mandevilles, perennials, vegetables, herbs, patio planters and more. Proceeds will help support local, regional, and global outreach. For more information, contact the church office at [\(610\) 696-5247](tel:6106965247).

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: JPCheryl@verizon.net.

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, Dick Lehr, Mike Dunn and Phil Dague.

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.