

Happy Thanksgiving!



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

Vol. 5, No. 48

November 27, 2014

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.

Local news in early October 1962

Here's what Downingtown area residents were talking about 52 years ago, according to local newspapers.

Theodore Griffith, co-owner of Griffith's Hardware in Downingtown, revealed that a preliminary agreement of sale had been signed with Devitt's Hardware, which had stores in Coatesville and West Chester. Griffith's grandfather founded the Downingtown hardware store in 1872.

New officers of the Rebekah Lodge 512, elected at a meeting held in the Odd Fellows Lodge in Lionville, were Lois Thomson, trustee, and Jennie Twaddell, treasurer. Reinstated members were Eva Wheatley, Dorothy Lambert and Emogene Kinzinger.

Plans for a \$900,000 shopping center in downtown Downingtown were announced by W.P. Canby, president of Borough Council. The private enterprise was to be financed by a corporation headed by Roger Clipp, an official of WFIL-TV and Triangle Publications. The plans called for a large building with 20,000 square feet of floor space and at least six adjoining buildings.

Colonial-style homes in Pickering Hunt Estates, built in Chester Springs by Fred Schubert, were selling for \$23,990.

Downingtown girls, serving as Candy Strippers at Chester County Hospital, were Rojane Ellis, Sharon Fennelly, Ruth Ann Travaglini, Judy White and Judy Ralston.

Elected as officers of the Ladies Evening Missionary Society at First Baptist Church, Downingtown, were: Mrs. Vernon Jameson, president; Mrs. Thomas Gabel, vice president; Mrs. Wilbur Felten, recording secretary; Mrs. James Manley, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Melba Lynn, treasurer.

Winners in the children's division of the costume contest at a Halloween party held at St. Paul's UCC Church, Lionville, were: Kathy Shreiner, prettiest; Clair Koser, ugliest; Nancy Hoffman, funniest. The judges were Mrs. Leo Stewart, Mrs. James Young, Mrs. Dale Coover, and Mrs. Harry Weaver.

New members of Central Presbyterian Church, Downingtown, included: Hayes Carr, Mr. and Mrs. Alan Detterline, Mrs. Marvin Hall, Mr. and Mrs. John Kiefel, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth McDermott, Beth and Diane McDermott, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Pyle, Mary and Sara Pyle, Dr. and Mrs. Donald Schwartz and Mr. and Mrs. Everett Walker.

Ernest Smedley, Minquas Fire Co., and Tom Lee, Alert Fire Co., were honored as Outstanding Firemen of the Year by the Downingtown Rotary Club.

Members of West Bradford's Democratic Committee, chosen to study the possibility of dividing the township into two or three precincts, were George Jefferis, Marshall Busby and M.M. Caffey.

School news

The DHS Lettermen's Club bought an oxygen tank and mask, to be available for emergencies at the school. To pay for the equipment, club members sold stationary and parked cars at home football games. Officers of the club were Ronald Brinton, president; Edgar Donnon, vice president; Dennis Luminella, secretary; and Clarence Wilkerson, treasurer.

Bill Pollock was elected president of the French Club at DHS. Other officers were Mary Ellen Crosby, vice president; Gwen Habecker, secretary; and Richard DiEugenio, treasurer.

The Blue and Gold, took second place in the judging of Pennsylvania high school newspapers. Members of the DHS student newspaper staff who were at the convention of the

state School Press Association in Bethlehem, where the award was presented, were Sharon Donaghy, Gail Dilworth, Mildred Miller, Connie Smedley, June Williamson and Gail Ziobro. Mrs. Evelyn Hamilton was the paper's faculty advisor.

Mary Ellen Crosby was elected president of the DHS Mathematics Club. Other officers were Ken Jordan, vice president, and Richard Staneskie, secretary.

Officers of the Future Homemakers of America Club at DHS were Lydia Belle Herr, president; Betty Spickler, vice president; Roberta Baer, secretary; Sally Pyle, treasurer; and Sally People, reporter.

Members of the Student Council at the Junior High were: Ninth grade—Richard Biondi, John Caldwell, Bob Geist, Linda Lammey, Carolyn Patrizio, Larry Smedley, Mike Welsh and Harry Wilson; Eighth grade—Phil Barlow, Mary Ann Brookover, Terry Davis, Connie Joyner, Cindy Kent, Alan Novak, Cathy Rogers, David Seek and Willy Von Hacht; Seventh grade—Ann Bishop, Linda Dilworth, Lynn Forbes, William Hardy, John Kline, Fred Pollock, Tom Stern and Charles Williams. And ninth grade class officers were Carolyn Patrizio, president; Cinda Davey, vice president; Frances Knight, secretary; and Linda Wheatley, treasurer.

Although George Murphy and Grant Smith ran back pass interceptions for touchdowns, the DHS football team lost to Pottstown, by a 26-12 score.

It's the Lancaster Avenue bridge in Downingtown



Paul Backenstose is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above as the Lancaster Avenue bridge in Downingtown. The bridge in the photo was built in 1802. It was replaced in 1921. The building in the center of the photo was the Bicking Paper Mill, which now is a restaurant.

There are thousands of newspaper articles in our archives

Volunteers have been coming to Ashbridge House, our 305-year-old headquarters, for the past four years to clip and organize articles and ads clipped from area newspapers. The clippings, which are ultimately pasted on card stock, and those cards are organized into two sets of newspaper files in our archival collection: **Family Files** and **Topic Files**.

The **Family Files** include articles about local people's births, deaths, marriages, retirements, engagements, awards, etc. Most of the articles in the Family Files were published since 1950. The Family Files now include 9,795 cards which have articles on more than 16,000 Downingtown area people. We have found that the most efficient way to list the articles is by arranging them by the last name first and the first letter of the first name.

Since the Family Files Index comprises 195 pages, it is split into two alphabetical sections on our website. You'll find those whose last names range from A to L at:

www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Family%20Files%20A-L.pdf. And those whose last names go from M to Z can be accessed at:

www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Family%20Files%20M-Z.pdf.

The **Topic Files** include articles on local municipal governments, businesses, schools, churches, organizations, and events. Some of the articles in the Topic Files date back to the 1930s. The 104-page Topic Files Index can be accessed via:

www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Topic%20Index.pdf

So, if you want to check out the huge number of newspaper articles we have in our archives, click on each of the online indexes noted above. You will quickly recognize many of the names, businesses, organizations, and bits of history.

Organization of the two file systems would not have been possible without the efforts of two groups of volunteers. Every Thursday afternoon, one group works on Topic File articles. That group is led by Carol Grigson; she is assisted by Terry Gaul, Marie Hill, June Reedy and Linda Lefko. Another group comes on the first Sunday of the month to update the Family Files. That group is composed of Hunter and Terry Gaul, Nancy Thompson, Donna Capriotti, Rahn Brackin, Kianna and Kevin Ly, Philip Hemcher and Parry Desmond. New volunteers are always welcome.

Michael Homan, now a West Chester University student, has been updating the Family Files Index ever since he was attending DHS East High School. And the Topic Files Index has been streamlined through the enormous efforts of Jordan Staub, with the assistance of Lauren McCauley.

Help the Historical Society by participating in the National Day of Giving

We have a day for giving thanks. We have two for getting deals. Now, we have #GivingTuesday, which is part of the National Day of Giving movement. On Tuesday, December 2, charities, families, businesses, community centers, and students around the world will come together for one common purpose: to celebrate generosity and to give.

Please support the Downingtown Area Historical Society by clicking on the link below to donate: www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Donate.html. Thank you.

**DECORATE YOUR TREE WITH ORNAMENTS
DEPICTING HISTORIC DOWNTOWN SITES**

\$5 each or 3 for \$10

Buy your tree ornaments at Ashbridge House (next to Chick-Fil-A)

1-4 PM SUNDAYS

Mail order info: www.downtownareahistoricalsociety.org/Gift%20Shop.html



#1 Borough Hall



#2 Alert Fire Hall



#3 Minquas Fire Hall



#4 Old East Ward School



#5 West Ward School



#6 Jr-Sr High School



#7 Gazebo in Kerr Park

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.

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

Free ads for Non-Profits

Christmas Carol Event

The Old Caln Historical Society will host a Candlelight Christmas Carol at 7 PM on Tuesday, December 2 at the Old Caln Meetinghouse on Route 340, Thorndale. The Fishers of Men from the Thorndale United Methodist Church, the Caln School Chorus and the Belltones and the Redmen from Coatesville Area High School will provide the entertainment. The program is free. Punch, hot cider and homemade cookies will be served after the program.

Christmas in Marshallton

Starting with Breakfast with Santa from 7 AM to noon at the West Bradford Fire Co., 1305 W. Strasburg Road, Christmas in Marshallton will be held on Saturday, Dec. 6. The Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 W. Strasburg Road, will host a day-long program, beginning at 9 AM, when you can find unique gifts at the Christmas Shop, listen to Christmas music in the historic sanctuary, and have lunch between 11:30 AM and 2:30 PM. Also, the Marshallton men's group will sell holiday wreaths and greenery. You can finish your day by stopping by the Holiday Cottage Shop before heading down to Martin's Tavern for the tree lighting ceremony between 4 and 6 PM.

Roberts supports Downingtown Library

Roberts Subaru in Downingtown has named the Downingtown Library as its Hometown Charity for the 2014-15 "Share the Love event. That means Subaru will donate \$250 for every Subaru vehicle it sells or leases between now and January 2, when the purchaser designates the Downingtown Library as their designated choice.

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.