

# Help us save our 305-year-old headquarters



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

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

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

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

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## Where Is This?



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

## Downingtown area news published 36 years ago

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

Thomas Shirey, treasurer of the **Downingtown-Lionville Babe Ruth League**, was arrested for embezzling about \$1,000 from the league's refreshment stand account.

Members of the **DHS homecoming** court were Sharon Clayton, Donna Storm, Dawn Brown, Carole Haigh, Lauri Brackbill, Maggie Von Hacht, Carol Harmon, Gina Rambo, Noelle Lennox and Lea Schreiner.

Many borough residents were wary of switching from paper ballots to **voting machines**, which would be used in the coming election.

Mary Holleran bought **Studio 3**, at 1 Park Lane in Downingtown.

Local **Cub Scouts** who qualified for the county-level physical fitness competition included Mark DelVecchio, Drew Bradley, Ricky Smith, David Preikszas, Chris Conner, Jeff Mowrer, Nate Hess, Jeff Lytle and Stephen Schaeffer.

**Scott Thatcher**, of Boy Scout Troop 8, sponsored by Hopewell Methodist Church, was installed as an Eagle Scout.

New members of **Central Presbyterian Church** were Mr. and Mrs. John Bergstrand, Sally Frederick, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Johnson, Lady and Dawn Kaylor, Steve Marsh, Jan Mish, Mr. and Mrs. Paul O'Hara, Jennifer Reardon, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Thompson and Cynthia Wood.

New officers of the Youth Fellowship group at **Hopewell Methodist Church** were Curt Schroeder, president; Becky Kring, vice president; Jim Fasel, treasurer; Sandy Bareford, secretary; and Georgia Newlin, ways and means chairman.

The **DHS football team** rallied from a 12-0 deficit at halftime and beat Spring-Ford 22-12. Quarterback Tim Burns, who ran back an interception for a score, was Downingtown's best overall player. Running back Steve Orth, who scored the first Whippet TD, was cited as the top offensive player, and linebacker Glennie Davis was named the best defender.

And Kurt Thompson's 40-yard field goal made the difference as DHS edged West Chester East 10-8. The Whippets' sole TD came on quarterback Tim Burns' 6-yard pass to Dave Kucera.

Paul Hurley, **DHS boys' soccer** coach, said "In the last two weeks, Mark Mathis has been outstanding," after the Whippets beat Boyertown 1-0. Mathis had an assist on Rick Altringer's goal in the Boyertown contest, and he had two goals against O.J. Roberts and one against West Chester East.

Recent **property transfers** included: 31 Rabbit Run Lane, Upper Uwchlan, \$66,942; 211 Meadow Drive, Caln, \$49,340; 112 Llandoverly Drive, Uwchlan, \$50,900; 135 Oak Street, Uwchlan, \$82,000; 111 Firethorn Road, East Brandywine, \$64,085; 1342 Crestmont Drive, West Bradford, \$56,000; 122 North Woodmont Drive, East Caln, \$108,500; 426 Sunset Drive, Downingtown, \$58,000; and 214 Robin Hood Lane, Wallace, \$88,270; 158 Whiteland Hunt Lane, West Whiteland, \$130,000.

Downingtown Fire Chief Robert Cumens said the fire that gutted the **Reading Railroad freight station** on Brandywine Avenue in the borough was probably caused by an arsonist.

Plans for **St. James Place**, a 40-unit residence for seniors, were approved by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development Department. The apartment building was to be built behind St. James Episcopal Church, Downingtown, which owned the land.

**Frank Marcocci**, a graduate of DHS, the University of Pittsburgh and Temple University, was appointed to be East Brandywine's representative on the Downingtown Area School Board. Marcocci took the seat held for many years by Glen Wagner, who resigned because of ill health.

New officers of the **Woman's Community Club of the Uwchlans** were Mrs. Lacey Lackey Jr., president; Mrs. Richard Newman, first vice president; Mrs. Walter Hurst, second vice president; Mrs. Earl Fegley, recording secretary; Mrs. William Isinger, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Elmer Matthews, treasurer.

**Kathleen Fiedler**, a DHS senior, was selected as Chester County's Junior Miss for 1978. She did a ballet routine for her talent program.

The **DHS doubles team** of Deb Hannum and Kim Hess qualified for District I tennis competition.

## **Amani's BYOB is helping us save Ashbridge House**

As we noted in last week's Hist-O-Gram, Ashbridge House, our 305-year-old headquarters on Route 30 in East Caln, needs major re-pointing because the decades-old mortar, which bonds the stonework on the house's east side walls, has deteriorated and rain water is leaking into the house. Re-pointing that wall will cost \$16,000, and it must be done ASAP.

That's why all the proceeds from our second annual "A Taste of Chester County" restaurant raffle will be used to pay for the re-pointing work. The raffle winner will receive six \$200 vouchers, with a total value of \$1,200, for meals at six great local restaurants. Beginning with this edition of our Hist-O-Gram, we will provide a write-up on one of the participating restaurants in the coming weeks.

This week we're featuring Amani's BYOB, located at 105 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, which is owned and operated by the husband and wife team of Jonathan and Jeanine Amann. The restaurant has been part of the Downingtown community since 2009.

Chef Jonathan Amann, earned the title of "Best Chef in Chester County" three years in a row by winning the "Culinary Cook Off" at the Chester County Restaurant Festival.

Amani's BYOB menu incorporates the best local ingredients available each season in a warm, friendly atmosphere. Over the years, Amani's BYOB has created relationships with local farmers and business owners, which enables them to bring the freshest local offerings to their menu. Amani's BYOB puts a twist on the traditional BYOB theme by offering a creative selection of mixers to be paired with the various spirits provided by their guests. They also offer outdoor seating on their patio during the warm months.

Amani's BYOB features monthly pairing dinners featuring craft beers and wines, as well as local seasonal fare. The restaurant also provides full service, on and off premise catering for any occasion.

Amani's BYOB is open 7 days a week: Mon-Fri; Lunch, 11:30-3, Sat-Sun; Brunch, 10-2, Mon-Thurs; Dinner, 5-10, and Fri-Sat 5-10:30, and Sun Dinner 5-9. For reservations, call 484-237-8179. For more information about Amani's BYOB, check out: <http://amanisbyob.com/>

The other participating restaurants are: St. Anthony's Restaurant, The General Warren Inn, The Kimberton Inn, The Orangery, and The Thorndale Inn.

Raffle tickets are \$50 each. They can be purchased at Ashbridge House from 1-4 PM on Sundays. You also can order them by calling 610-269-1709 or sending an email to: [Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org). The winning ticket will be drawn at 3 PM on Sunday, November 16. You don't have to be at the drawing to win. For more info on the raffle, go to: [www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org). Please help us preserve Ashbridge House, a local historic treasure.

## **19 borough sites accepted by PA Historical & Museum Commission**

The October 12, 1978 edition of the *East Branch Citizen* noted that Downingtown historian Jane Davidson had learned that all 19 of the structures she recommended were accepted by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission inventory of historical places. And 11 of them were nominated for the National Register of Historic Places.

Davidson noted that historic preservation is the “best type of soft insurance for a town that wants to maintain its property values and prevent property deterioration.”

The properties, all along East Lancaster Avenue in the borough, which were accepted by the state commission, included:

**Hunt Downing House**, 420-422 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1802. There were many changes later in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, when the building was converted into two residences. And when a Philadelphia architect supervised the removal of 40 paper-thin, smoky-colored glass panes from the house, they were placed in the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia.

Downing was an inn keeper and part-owner of a stage coach line. He was a quartermaster during the Whiskey rebellion, helped create the military commissary during the American Revolution, and was Chester County’s first postmaster.

**William Todd House**, 330 E. Lancaster Ave., which now is the Downingtown Library. Built for Dr. Todd in 1800, it was converted into the Thomas sisters’ boarding school, which was in operation from 1837 to 1877. The library bought the building in 1913.

**Ellis Y. Brown House**, 328 E. Lancaster Ave., was built by George Irwin in 1894. Brown was a leading Quaker, and his diary covered life in the Downingtown area over a 50-year period.

**Thomas E. Parke House**, 320 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1875 for Dr. Parke. Parke and members of his family had practiced medicine in the Downingtown area for eight decades, as far back as the Colonial period.

**George Washington Inn**, Uwchlan and E. Lancaster Avenues, now Pook & Pook auction house. Built in 1761 as an inn, the original owner was John Downing. It was then known as the King George prior to the American Revolution, when it was a military commissary for American troops. And in 1796, it was the first post office in the county. Since it was half-way between Philadelphia and Lancaster, it was a famous stop-off point for stage coach lines.

**Jesse Meredith House**, 447 E. Lancaster Ave., was erected as a store in 1815. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it was a furniture store operated by William Rogers, one of the founders of the Downingtown National Bank, and supporter of the incorporation of the borough in 1859.

**St. James Episcopal Church**, 409 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1843, was named after a Philadelphia church, which gave much support to establishing the Downingtown parish.

**Milton Hoopes Pottery**, 413-423 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1830. Hoopes operated a pottery there from 1841 until 1864, when he started working for Vickers’ pottery.

**Dr. George Fairlamb House**, 435 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1815 for Dr. Fairlamb, one of the founders of the Chester County Medical Society.

**William Stauffer House**, 346 E. Lancaster Ave., built in 1890. Stauffer was a merchant who specialized in stoves and tinware.

**Breesy Court**, 517 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1909 by John Gilbert McIlvaine, a Philadelphia architect, for Mrs. M.C. Breese, daughter of Gov. Andrew Curtin, Pennsylvania governor during the Civil War.

**Jug House**, 736 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1804 for Joshua Kerswey, a physician. It was a custom back then for artisans involved in construction to be given ale while working. Since

Kerswey didn't believe in the consumption of spirits and refused to offer workmen any alcoholic beverages, they used limestone to create a jug in the façade of the stone house.

**John Taylor farm**, Brown Avenue, was built in 1738, the property has been operated as a farm since the early 18<sup>th</sup> Century.

**John Webster House**, 425 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1830 for Webster, who lived on the west side of the house and operated a store out of the east side in the late 1830s.

**Thomas Moore House**, 341 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1729. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century, Zebulon Thomas, who was an Underground Railroad "conductor" and whose daughters operated a boarding school (now the library) across the street, lived there. It was known as the Tea House in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when it was a restaurant known for its chicken and waffles.

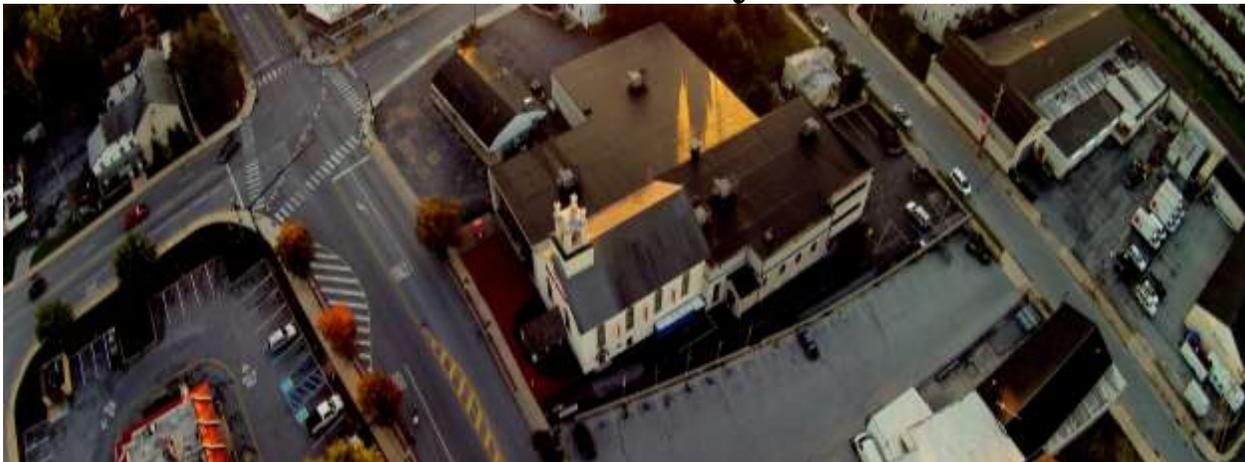
**The Carriage House**, 343 E. Lancaster Ave., behind the Thomas Moore House, was built around 1730. It probably was an outbuilding of the Moore property, possibly a springhouse or washhouse.

**Richard Webster House**, 429 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in the early 1830s for Webster, who was a mason.

**Downingtown Friends Meeting House**, 700 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1806, making it the oldest house of worship in the borough. Its graveyard was established in 1813, and the nearby school was constructed in 1919.

**Downingtown National Bank**, 408 E. Lancaster Ave., was built in 1862, a year after the bank was established. The bank was located there until 1901, when its headquarters was opened at Center Square in 1901.

## It's the former Central Presbyterian Church



Steve MacCall-Carter is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly tell us that the former use of the white building with the bell tower in the above photo had been Central Presbyterian Church. In 1973, the Hamilton family opened Dane Décor, a furniture store, in the former church, after Central Presbyterian built a new church on Uwchlan Avenue (Route 113). Construction of the church started in 1863. However, completion of building, which cost \$7,000, was delayed until September of 1964 because so many local construction workers left the area to fight in the Civil War. The photo was provided by Phil Dague's new drone/camera.

## **Additional ways to access our free Hist-O-Grams**

Some people have had difficulty accessing their weekly Hist-O-Gram for a variety of mysterious reasons. However, you will **always find** the latest edition on the left side of the home page of our website: [www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/).

And you can access previously published Hist-O-Grams at:  
[www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html)

## **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](mailto:vance_usher@netzero.net), 610-329-1056, 320 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

## **Free ads for Non-Profits**

### ***Hope for Helm Fundraiser***

Matt Helm is paralyzed from the waist down, due to a recent kayaking accident. Matt was born and raised in Downingtown, and is known as an exceptional person and a tremendous athlete. He and his wife, Lindsay Helm, live in Downingtown and had a new son, Hunter Helm, in August. The family faces a difficult financial situation in the coming months due to the medical expenses incurred from the accident. To help alleviate some of their worries, everyone is invited to the first annual Hope for Helm event, to be held from 6-10 PM on Saturday, November 15 at the United Sports Training Center in West Bradford. There will be dinner and drinks, as well as a silent auction and 50/50 raffle. To purchase tickets to the event and for more info, see: [www.hopeforhelm.com](http://www.hopeforhelm.com)

### ***Spaghetti Dinner***

The Eagle-Glenmoore Lions Club will have a spaghetti dinner from 4-7:30 PM on Saturday, October 11 at the Mount Pickering Masonic Lodge at 218 Byers Road in Eagle. Tickets will be available at the door. Children under four are free. Proceeds will benefit the Diabetic Alert Dog Program, through the Canine Partners for Life. Diners are asked to bring donate a non-perishable food item for the Chester County Food Bank.

### ***Downingtown Library Programs & Activities***

The Film Forum is held at the library at 6:30 PM every second Tuesday of the month. Anyone who enjoys watching and discussing films is welcome to join. Incentives include occasional free movie passes and/or credit for movie rentals. The discussion on October 14 is Abbott & Costello "Meet Frankenstein," and on November 11, it's "Cleopatra" (Liz Taylor version).

A Writer's Group meets at 6:30 PM on the third Thursday of every month. The open forum for adults who are willing to share their writing and participate in critiques.

A Book Club meets at 6:30 PM on every fourth Tuesday. The discussion on Oct. 28 will be on Amanda Coplin's *The Child's Child*, and on Wilkey Collins' *The Moonstone* at the Nov. 25 session.

Call the library at 610-269-2741 for more info on any of these programs.

### ***Family Fun Festival & Ghost Walk***

Everyone is invited to the Fall Family Fun Festival and Ghost Walk, to be held from 5-8 PM Saturday, October 18 in Marshallton. The event, sponsored by the West Bradford Historical and Recreation Commissions, will include pumpkin and face painting, hayrides, and spellbinding stories told around a

bonfire. Those who wish to help on the event as a volunteer should contact Mike Euler at 610-269-4174 or [meuler@westbradford.org](mailto:meuler@westbradford.org).

### **Roast Beef Dinner**

As part of West Bradford's Family Fun Festival, Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 W. Strasburg Road, will have its annual Roast Beef Dinner from 4:30-6:30 PM Saturday, October 18. Served family-style, the dinner will include roast beef, mashed potatoes, mushroom and beef gravy, green beans, cole slaw, applesauce, rolls, dessert and beverage. Tickets are \$12 for adults, \$5 for children between 5 and 12. Dinners are eat-in or take-out. For more info, call 610-696-5247.

### **Soccer Program**

The Glenmoore Eagle Youth Association's HIGH 5 soccer program will be held at Hickory Park, 351 Park Rd., Chester Springs, from 3-4 PM on Saturdays, beginning on Sept. 6. The free program is for players between 5 and 19 years of age who have special needs. We also need high school students to help out as one-on-one buddies -- no soccer experience necessary. For more info and to register, go to:

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

### **Golf Tournament**

Downingtown-Thorndale Rotary Club will have a golf tournament on Wednesday, October 15 at Downingtown Country Club. Registration is at 2:30 PM., and the shot-gun start is at 3 PM. Corporate Package (\$425) includes foursome for 9 holes (scramble play), cart, name on one tee box or green on course and at reception, prizes, cocktail reception with appetizers and one hour open bar.

*Individual Golf (\$85) includes 9 holes, cart, prizes, cocktail reception with appetizers and one hour open bar. Hole Sponsor (\$100) includes name on one tee box or green on course. Cocktail Reception (\$30) includes appetizers and one hour open bar 5 PM to 7 PM. Register via Chamber website: [www.dtrcc.com](http://www.dtrcc.com).*

### **2 Winners Will Get a Playhouse**

The Homebuilders of Chester and Delaware Counties are sponsoring a fundraiser in which two winners will win a backyard playhouse. The playhouses are 8 feet wide, 8 feet long and 8 feet tall. Proceeds from the fundraiser will go to Kenzie's Kure, whose mission is to cure Type 1 Diabetes. Tickets are \$25 each. The winning tickets will be drawn at the Fall Into Fabulous event at the Downingtown Country Club on October 2. For more details and buy tickets, click on: [www2.jdrf.org/fallintofabulous](http://www2.jdrf.org/fallintofabulous).

### **Log House Dinner Raffle**

Winner of the raffle will win a dinner for four at the Downingtown Log House on Lancaster Avenue. The dinner will be catered by St. Anthony's Restaurant. To purchase raffle tickets—\$50 each—call Ginny Pierce, 610-269-2750. Proceeds from the raffle will go to the Downingtown Area Senior Center. The winning ticket will be drawn at the Senior Center's Harvest Hop on November 8.

### **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 at 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).

*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.*