



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

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

Vol. 5, No. 37

September 11, 2014

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Downingtown area news published 36 years ago

Noted below are news items which were originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* during the latter part of September 1978.

Borough residents were invited to participate in the formation of the **Downingtown Historical Society**. The article noted that: the earliest record of land in Downingtown was in 1681; in 1716, Peter Bezellion laid out the road (now Lancaster Avenue) that connected Philadelphia with Indian villages to the west, but there was no road west of the Brandywine; there was food commissary in Downingtown for the American troops during the Revolutionary

War; and President James Buchanan learned of his fiancée's death while staying at the Halfway House in Downingtown.

Officers of the Philathea Class of **St. Paul's UCC Church**, Lionville, included: Mrs. Harry Dewees, president; Mrs. Clara Emery, vice president; Mrs. Elmer Matthews, secretary; and Mrs. Ernest Rodney, treasurer.

Officers elected to lead the **Golden Age Club**, which met at Downingtown United Methodist Church, were Ernie Smedley, president; Aubrey Dawson, vice president; Dot Thomas, treasurer; and Hazel Miller, secretary. Committee chairpersons were Gene Charles, hospitality; Sara Wood, program; Sara Perkins, sunshine; Helen Watkins, bus trips; and Hap Charles, public relations.

DHS students Arthur Freas III, Kathie Plante and Steve Wisdom were semi-finalists in the **National Merit Scholarship** program.

Girl Scouts from **Cadette Troop 1242, West Bradford**, who spent a week camping in Canada, were Dawn Cochrane, Laura Evans, Tammie McGrady, Suzanne McHugh, Donna Mull, Betsy Supplee, Leslie and Lois Tompkins, Barbara Whiteman and Kim Wyatt.

Student leaders of the **DHS marching band** were Jerry Ware and Michele McKibbin, drum majors; Nancy Yetter, silk squad captain; Sharon Clayton, pom-pon squad captain; Gina Poluch, majorette captain; and Leslie Semple and Marcia Basehore, rifle squad co-captains. Gary Wagner was band director; Michael Givler was assistant director, and Marianne Murtaugh was in charge of the pom-pon girls and majorettes.

Recent **property transfers** included: 330 Gwynned Court, Uwchlan, \$45,015; 47 Suffolk Court, East Brandywine, \$48,650; 6 Cambridge Road, Upper Uwchlan, \$63,500; 1543 Broad Run Road, West Bradford, \$64,700; 6 Marty Close Road, Wallace, \$73,767; 153 Jefferson Ave., Downingtown, \$25,000; and 12 Downing Circle, East Caln, \$108,000.

Photo of Brandywine Band taken by William South



From Chester County Historical Society's photo archives

William South took this photo of Downingtown's Brandywine Band in about 1905. The shot was taken in front of Pawling's Meat Market on West Lancaster Avenue in the borough.

Downingtown's William South was a color photography pioneer

William South, one of the pioneers of color photography, lived in Downingtown. And South's story has been posted on Wikipedia by Jim LaDrew, retired photo finisher and a Downingtown historian, and Pamela Powell, the Chester County Historical Society's photo archivist.

According to Powell, "South was a Renaissance man who had many talents, not only as an inventor, but also as an artist and musician. He changed and adapted according to the situation."

Born in 1872 in Downingtown, South was a successful commercial photographer, working for railroad and steamer lines at the turn of the 19th Century. He was fascinated with the pioneering work of Arthur Louis Ducos DuHauron, who created a color photograph in 1868 by superimposing layers of red, blue and yellow pigments. South made improvements on DuHauron's idea and patented a camera that took three identical images at once through orange, violet and green filters. When these negatives were printed, using successive printings with corresponding red, blue and yellow pigments, it created a color photograph with the appearance of a watercolor.

South patented his camera and process in 1904, and named it the Solgram Color Photograph. He built a factory on St. Joseph's Alley in the Johnsonstown section of Downingtown to manufacture paper and chemicals.

He had difficulty marketing the process because Eastman Kodak did not allow their dealers to sell products of other makers. He unsuccessfully sued Kodak long before anti-trust laws put an end to the practice.

South also ran a school for commercial photographers called the Keystone School of Photography at the site of his Downingtown factory.

Besides being a talented photographer, South was also a gifted violinist. He retired from photography and became the manager of the Premier Dance Orchestra, gave music lessons and built violins. He and his students gave performances at the Old Fiddlers' Picnics in the 1920s.

The archives of the Solgram Color Photo Co.--including business records, photographs, patents and advertising materials--are in the Chester County Historical Society's collection. A guide is available on the website at www.chestercohistorical.org/photo-search.

His photographs were featured at the Philadelphia Museum of Art in a 1989 exhibition, selected from Philadelphia area public collections as part of the Photography Sesquicentennial Project.

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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.

This Simpson's Store was on Village Ave. in Lionville



Many people thought the Simpson's general store in the photo above was the one operated for many years by Bob Simpson in Eagle. However, Russ Faller was a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify it as James Simpson's store on Village Avenue in Lionville.

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

Art & Craft Show

Downingtown Borough will be holding the annual Log House Art & Craft Show from noon-4 PM on Sunday, September 21 at Kerr Park. Hopewell Boy Scout Troop 8 will be selling refreshments. Performances by [Jeanette Lynne](#) (noon-2 PM) and [Gina & Jack](#) (2 PM-4 PM). Vendor spaces are \$25. Vendor application and information can be found at: www.downingtown.org/LogHouseArtCraftShow.html

Fall Fun Festival

In addition to a bake sale and lunch, other attractions at the festival, from 8 AM to 2 PM Saturday, September 13, at Marshallton Methodist Church, 1282 W. Strasburg Road, will be a flea market. Vendors' fees are \$22.50 per space and \$5 per table if needed. Proceeds benefit United Methodist missions. For more information, call Doug at 610-696-7657.

East Brandywine History

The East Brandywine Historical Commission will present a program on Bridge Mill Farm, which was part of a 180-acre parcel purchased in 1739 by John Culbertson. The farm contained an industrial center, which supplied its residents with everything from running water to gas lighting, and its outside customers with everything from butter to sawdust and wool. It's the only home in East Brandywine that's listed on the National Historic Register. The program will be presented at 3:30 PM Sunday, September 21 at the East Brandywine Township Building on Route 322 in Guthriesville. For more information contact Carol Schmidt at carolsinex@gmail.com

Drug Take-Back Day

The Downingtown Police Department will again partner with the U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to participate in National Prescription Drug Take-Back Day on Saturday, September 27, from 10 AM to 2 PM. This is an opportunity for the public to safely discard unwanted, unused and expired prescription drugs. Bring your medications for disposal to Downingtown Borough Hall Annex Building at 4 W. Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. For more information, call 610-269-0344, ext. 200.

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.

Historical Program

West Caln Historical Society will offer a program on the "Massacre of the Conestoga in Lancaster by the Paxton Boys," presented by Jack Brubaker (a/k/a the Scribbler), author, historian, and Lancaster newspaper correspondent, at 7 PM Tuesday, Sept. 16 at the West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Highway, Wagontown. The program is free and all are welcome.

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.*

Class of 1954 reunion

The DHS Class of 1954 will have its 60th reunion at Whitford Country Club on Friday, September 20, beginning at noon with a social hour, followed by a dinner at 1 PM. For more info, please contact frank.manetta620@comcast.net. Send reservations to Frank Manetta, 620 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335.

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.

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. 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.