



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

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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@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

Downingtown area news 98 years ago

Noted below are news items published in the August 24, 1916 edition of the *Downingtown Archive*. It was characterized as an annual “Booster” issue, since the issue focused on the area’s progress in the current year. And the Downingtown weekly newspaper had much to crow about in 1916.

The **Frank Miller Paper Co.** added a paper box factory, and when construction of the company's new paper mill is completed, it will employ about 500 men. Also building additions were the S. A. Bicking Paper Co., the Downingtown Manufacturing Co., the Rowe Motor Co. and the Kerr Paper Co.

Also, the **Philadelphia Brass Works**, recently established a plant on the former property of the Cohansey Glass Works on Chestnut Street.

And the **Eastern Chair and Novelty Co.** plant in East Downingtown claimed to be the nation's "leading manufacturer" of fiber chair seats, which had "every appearance of genuine leather." One of its biggest customers was the 1,000 chain stores operated by the Woolworth Co.

The **Chester Valley Electric Co.** had recently strung power distribution lines along the Lancaster Pike to Whitford and Exton, so farmers in those areas could have lighting and run motors in their barns.

With all the industrial growth, that meant an increased population and a need for more classrooms. So the basement of the **high school** on West Lancaster Avenue was remodeled to accommodate three more classrooms for "white children and one room for colored children." (The high school in 1916 was part of the Central School, grades 1-12, until a new high school was opened on Manor Avenue in 1932. Then the former Central building housed the West Ward Elementary School for several decades.) Students had to pass an entrance exam to enroll in the high school. And teachers' monthly salaries ranged between \$60 and \$75 per month.

Jane Ringwalt, Susan Hoopes and Mrs. George Fisher had invited several local women to meet in the parlors of the Minquas Fire Co., to form the **Downingtown Woman's Club** on October 14, 1914. And by 1916, the club's membership had reached 100. (The club will celebrate its 100th anniversary at a Centennial luncheon on September 24).

The **Country Club of the Philadelphia YMCA**, established southwest of the borough line in West Bradford in 1898, was "becoming more popular each year, as an ideal place for young men from Philadelphia to spend their weekends and vacations." The 479-acre "resort" included six cottage-dormitories, a dining hall which could accommodate 150, and tennis courts.

Improvements and changes among local churches in 1916, were the new Sunday School addition built by **Central Presbyterian**, and the establishment of an orchestra, under the direction of Professor William Caulfield, at **St. Joseph's Catholic Church**. And **Windsor Baptist Church** in Upper Uwchlan had a new baptistery and communion table, and the parsonage had been painted and cement sidewalks were installed outside.

The **Downingtown Opera House** was showing movies on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights; admission was 5 cents and 10 cents.

The **Downingtown Moose Lodge**, which had 52 charter members when it was founded in 1912, had increased in size to nearly 300 members in 1916, and had its own orchestra.

The **I.J. Dietz store** at 117 E. Lancaster Ave. was advertising "good reliable school shoes," whose prices ranged from \$1.20 to \$2.50.

And local folks had two options when considering custom-tailored clothes: **A. Travaglini** on Brandywine Avenue or **Domenico D'Attilio** at 137 W. Lancaster Ave.

While G.P. McIntire was selling **Fords** for as little as \$325 in East Downingtown, W.N. Howe was offering **Cadillacs**, at 115 E. Lancaster Ave. for as much as \$2,120. And prices at the Downingtown Motor Co., 206 E. Lancaster Ave., for a new **Buick** ranged from \$685 for a roadster to \$1,055 for a 5-passenger touring car.

Local news originally published 67 years ago

The following news items were retrieved from local papers published in April 1947.

Officials from the Downingtown Borough and Caln Township **School Districts** worked out the details of which properties in Caln would be annexed by the borough. Property owners on the eastern end of Caln had petitioned the borough about a year earlier to become part of the Downingtown School District.

Members of the Downingtown Branch of the **Memorial Hospital Auxiliary** elected the following officers: Mrs. John Miller, president; Mrs. Edward Sharp, first vice president; Mrs. Donald White, second vice president; Mrs. William Reed, recording secretary; and Mrs. James Wood, treasurer.

Girl Scouts invested into **Troop 10, Marshallton**, included Edith Albertson, Edith Smyers, Carlene Yetter, Caroline Fern and Dolores Wilson. Leaders of the troop were Dorothy Gray and Lilley-Anne Gyger.

Members of **Boy Scout Troop 52**, Marshallton, who spent a weekend at Camp Horseshoe were Robert and Charles Bunting, Raymond Fellenbaum, Fred Martin, Carl Bone, Dannie Place, Donald Fraim, Kenneth Trimble, Pete McCue, James and Donald Laney, Ronald Yetter, and Jack and Robert Sellers.

Mrs. William Bender, captain of the **Red Cross** drive in Wallace Township, reported that her team had surpassed their goal. Members of the team were Mrs. John Adams, Mrs. Noah Sensenig, Mrs. William Rigg, Mrs. Robert Kerstetter and Jane McLaughlin.

Record attendance, 456 people, came to the **DHS Alumni Association's** 60th annual banquet, held at the Alert Fire Co., Downingtown. Music was provided by a brass quartet, comprised of Class of 1947 members Raymond Kipp and Nancy Walleigh, trumpet; Bob Lillard and Dane Kline, trombones; plus Katherine Mosteller on piano.

Newly installed officers of the **Brandywine Lodge of Odd Fellows**, Downingtown, included: C.A. Woodard, past grand; Harry Brown Jr., noble grand; Allen Popjoy, vice grand; Creston Shoemaker, warden; Herbert Kreider, right supporter to the noble grand; Gilbert Cox, chaplain; Allen Woodward, right supporter to the vice grand; and Ralph Kinsey, left supporter.

In addition to serving dinners daily, guests could buy "legal beverages" at the **Colonial Inn** on West Lincoln High, Downingtown.

Elected as officers of the **Downingtown Woman's Club** were: Mrs. John Fisher, president; Mrs. Lee Hamilton, first vice president; Mrs. Frank Lenhardt, second vice president; Mrs. William Bender, recording secretary; Mrs. Walter Snyder, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Herman Faucett, treasurer.

The following members of the **Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan** were elected to serve for three years: Mrs. Wayne Millard, president; Mrs. Elmer Matthews, first vice president; Mrs. Sara Abel, recording secretary; Mrs. George Benham, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Parke Plank, treasurer.

Elected as officers of the Woman's Missionary Society at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Upper Uwchlan, were Mrs. Walter Garvine, president; Mrs. Morris Dewees, vice president; Mrs. Harvey Funderwhite, secretary; and Mrs. Oscar Darlington, treasurer.

Student Council officers at DHS were Kenneth McCardell, president; Thomas DiOttavio, vice president; Gilda Fazzini, secretary; and Austin Windle, treasurer.

Happy Days Farm in Lionville was selling fire equipment, including a 1924 Reo speedwagon and a Hale centrifugal pumper on a trailer.

Inducted as officers of the **Pilgrim Lodge of Odd Fellows**, Lionville, were Kenneth Kirkner, noble grand; Schuyler Rennard, vice grand; Clinton Smedley, warden; Harry Quay, chaplain; Samuel Supplee, conductor; Warren Supplee, right scene supporter; James Thackery, left scene supporter; Leon Gordon, outside guardian; Edwin Smedley, inside guardian; Sherman Kirkpatrick, right supporter to the noble grand; Everett Wilson, left supporter to the noble grand; Horace Wilson, left supporter to the vice grand.

From the Dutch Cupboard to The Thorndale Inn

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

The original property, purchased from William Penn in 1698, was used as a water, corn, or grist mill until the original house, dating from the late 18th or early 19th centuries, was sold in 1933 to Wilson and Pauline Bicking. In 1938, the Bickings sold the property to Jackson and Eleanor Taylor who turned the old farmhouse into The Dutch Cupboard restaurant. After the Taylors operated it for 24 years, the restaurant changed hands several times, before it became Al Mantini's Dutch Arms before receiving its current name The Thorndale Inn in 1974. The latest owner, Sam Estephan, has been running the Inn for the past 23 years.

Our luncheon party of 10 was seated in the comfortable, smaller dining room, where we chose from a full menu featuring appetizers, salads, entrees and desserts. Our group chose a nice selection of appetizers including a well-proportioned and varied Seafood Combo featuring Shrimp Cocktail, Shrimp Lejon, Scallops, Clams Casino and Crab Cakes. This was complemented by a freshly prepared Caesar Salad. Additional selections included homemade Lobster Bisque, Crab Fritters with Mango Sauce and Chicken Mediterranean sautéed in garlic and lemon juice.

Service was efficient for our party, including a children's selection recommendation for the tots. And the restaurant offers a full selection of wine, beer & liquor.

The Thorndale Inn accommodates large and small dining parties, has a comfortable, casual bar, as well as outside seating as weather permits.

We want to thank The Thorndale Inn for their gracious donation to the Downingtown Area Historical Society's second annual “A Taste of Chester County” fundraiser, which will be conducted this fall.

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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.

It's at 681 Fairview Road in Wallace Township



Sandy Brannan, life-long Wallace Township resident and long-time archivist, is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify the location of the house in the photo above as 681 Fairview Road, Glenmoore. Sandy also noted that much of the house's history was cited in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's blog on "Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories," a survey of archival collections held by the many small, primarily volunteer-run historical organizations in the Philadelphia area. According to Howson family papers (1849-1952) in the Wallace Township's archives, the Henry Howson family's primary residence was in Philadelphia, but it also had a summer home called Brae Head Farm in Wallace Township. Brae Head functioned not only as a summer home, but also as a farm. Henry Howson, Jr. (1859-1937) was involved in the local Fairview Presbyterian Church's annual flower, fruit, and vegetable exhibition, both as an organizer and as an exhibitor, from the establishment of the competition in 1897 until at least 1920. For more info about the property, see: www.trulia.com/property/3055068801-681-Fairview-Rd-Glenmoore-PA-19343.

Paid ads for businesses

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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

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.

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.*

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.