



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

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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 response to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Local news items originally published in late August 1979

Noted below are items originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* 36 years ago.

- Most people who lived near **St. Joseph's Cemetery** near the Downingtown-West Bradford border didn't want to talk to a reporter about the legend of the graveyard being haunted by ghosts. "I have no comment," insisted one Glenside Avenue resident who lived near the cemetery. "We just want to leave them alone," she added, without divulging who "them" were. Ghost stories about the cemetery, however, go back for decades, explained Mary Mahan, longtime Downingtown resident and local art teacher. "We were told not to walk past there (the cemetery) after a certain time of night," recalled Mahan, because the ghost of a headless dog supposedly waited in the archway of the cemetery.

- Vince DiEuliis, president of the Downingtown Council, claimed there were several sites in the borough, which would meet **Chemical Leaman Tank Lines'** needs for a new headquarters, instead of relocating the trucking company's main office from the borough to Lionville, as planned. One was an 8.5-acre site on Jackson Avenue, near the Pepperidge Farm plant on Chestnut Street. Another was the historic Pollock's Mill property on the east side of Manor Avenue. Both sites were zoned for industrial use. Although about half of the Pollock's Mill site was in a flood plain, regrading work could make it useable, according to borough manager Don Greenleaf. And though it wasn't for sale, a third possibility was the farm land on the west side of Manor Avenue, just beyond the borough line, in Caln Township, which was owned by the Catholic Archdiocese of Philadelphia. That site had been where the proposed St. John Neumann Hospital was to be built, but the plan was shot down by federal and state governmental agencies.

- The Downingtown School District again voted against providing **mid-day bus service** for kindergarten students because the service would cost the district between \$40,000 and \$50,000 a year. Kindergarten pupils who attended morning sessions had bus service to school, and those who attended afternoon classes had transportation from school. However, parents of kindergarten students could make private agreements with a bus contractor to provide mid-day service.

- Recent **property transfers** included: 110 Aberdare Lane, Uwchlan, \$50,990; 1471 Federal Drive, West Bradford, \$61,900; 504 Thomas Road, Downingtown, \$47,830; 332 South Balderston Drive, West Whiteland, \$90,000; 3401 Windsor Lane, Caln, \$50,000; 32 Hastings Court, East Brandywine, \$45,500; 10 Highview Road, Upper Uwchlan, \$73,000; 119 Woodland Circle, East Caln, \$118,000.

- Elected as officers of the Knights of Columbus Council at **St. Joseph's Catholic Church**, Downingtown, were: Ed Maney, grand knight; Peter Bonaduce, deputy grand knight; Stanley Sarmiento, recording secretary; and Frank Saello, warden.

- Members of **Boy Scout Troop 8**, sponsored by Hopewell Methodist Church, East Brandywine, who earned merit badges while attending Camp Jubilee were Steve Dolnack, Keith Brian, Jeff McCarty, John Ackroyd, Sean Breckley, Bill and Jim Flanagan, Jack Church and Bob Mauger.

- DHS grads **Leslie "Hoppy" Hayes**, Class of 1972, and **Roger Patrizio**, Class of 1973, became Pikebusters by running in the 14-mile Pikes Peak Marathon, over a twisting path up the Colorado mountain, which is 14,110 feet above sea level.

News published in *The Archive* 61 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in August 1954 issues of the *Downingtown Archive*.

- **Joseph Driscoll** of Downingtown, a PECO employee, saved the lives of two West Chester youths after their car crashed into a utility pole.
 - These members of **Boy Scout Troop 2**, Downingtown, earned the rank of second class: George Archie, Dominick Carbo, Thomas Edge, Jeff Everhart, Howard Hopkins, Jack Law, Joseph Natalie, Dallett Norris, Jack Stine and John Yamshak.
 - **Samuel Matthews**, Chester Springs, won the Chester County 4-H Club tractor driving contest.
 - **Robert Roussey** won the Downingtown Little League batting championship with a .441 average.
 - **Joan Hughes** was named Miss Downingtown of 1954.
 - A machine to be used to destroy secret Pentagon documents was being built by the **Downingtown Manufacturing Co.**
 - The **Swan Diner** was moved from Brandywine Avenue in the borough back to the intersection of Route 100 and Boot Road, where it had been located about 20 years earlier.
 - With an enrollment of 247 students, **St. Joseph's Catholic School** was about to open its doors in Downingtown for the first time.
 - The **Downingtown Rotary Club** donated a public address system to the borough to be used at Kerr Park.
 - Officers of the **Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan** were Dr. Anna Biddle, president; Mrs. Robert Chapman, first vice president; Mrs. William Balderston, second vice president; Mrs. Ethel Leslie, recording secretary; Mrs. Paul Smith, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. J.M. Acker, treasurer.

Brief, but important

- Apologies to the legendary lions from the **Lionville Fire Co.**, who won tug-of-war contests all over Chester County for decades. Despite those accomplishments, we incorrectly claimed in last week's Hist-O-Gram that the Alert Fire Co. team won the tug-of-war competition at the West Bradford Co. Carnival in July 1963. Mea maxima culpa.
 - Congratulations to the **Downingtown Diamond Dawgs**, who won the State American Legion baseball championship by beating Red Land 5-1 at the Owl's Field in West Lawn, near Reading, on Saturday. The Dawgs, who started playing in the Middle Atlantic Tournament this week, are managed by Scott Rambo. The Dawgs' Kenny Jarema was named the state tournament's Most Valuable Player and Most Outstanding Offensive Player. Winning pitcher Jeff Armstrong struck out nine and allowed only three hits in seven innings. Jarema picked up the save. Downingtown clinched a spot in the Mid-Atlantic Regional by beating Nanticoke 10-1. Jarema was 4-for-5 in that game, with a triple, home run and three runs scored. Downingtown had lost 5-3 to Nanticoke in the first round, before winning five straight games for the state title.

What area residents were talking about 67 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local newspapers in early February 1948.

- **Brandywine VFW Post No. 845**, Downingtown, led by Commander James Fennelly, moved into its new home on West Lancaster Avenue. The Post had 27 members—veterans of the Spanish American War (1898) and World War I—when it was founded in 1932. Howard Harvey was the first post commander. And its Auxiliary was established in 1947; Lillian Thomas was the first madam president. In 1999, the organization's name was changed to the Henry J. Thomas Memorial Post, in honor of the Post's commander for many years.

- Dr. M.H. Neff bought the popular **Tea House** restaurant, at 341 E. Lancaster Avenue in the borough for \$38,000. The restaurant had been famous for its chicken and waffles, since 1914. Built in 1730, the house served as a "station" on the Underground Railroad for runaway slaves before the Civil War.

- Downingtown's **First Baptist Church** had a mortgage burning celebration. The loan was used to pay for the construction of the Sunday School building.

- Youngsters who sold the most tickets for the turkey dinner at **Marshallton Methodist Church** were Jo-Ann LeFevre, Robert Sellers, June Ellingsworth, Sonny Wallace, Barbara Durnall, Lois Hoopes, Robert McCue, Harold Trimble, Barry Wickersham, Richard Busby, Philip Young and Tootie Ferri.

- Members of **Troop 79**, who came to a special Boy Scout service at Glen Moore Methodist Church, included Ralph Hannum, Harry Muller, David Johnson, Francis Flynn, Joseph Young and Stanley Young. Those who earned Tenderfoot badges were David Grimes, Grier Miller, Kenneth Comstock and Joseph Mason.

- Although the Whippets had thrown a scare into the West Chester Henderson basketball team in their first meeting, the **DHS boys** were crushed 64-41 by the Warriors in the return battle. It didn't help Downingtown's cause when Dan Barrow suffered a dislocated shoulder in the third quarter and had to leave the game with 13 points.

- Officers elected by members of the Washington Camp of the **Patriotic Order of Sons of America**, Downingtown, included: Frank Swarner, president; Frank Bicking, vice president; Thomas Philllips, master of forms; Graham Bentley, recording secretary; Gilbert Cox, financial secretary; Leland Wilson, treasurer; Marvin Shirk, conductor; Parke Darlington, inspector; Attmore Pollock, guard; and Horace Carpenter, trustee.

- Members of the **Downingtown Visiting Nurse Association** agreed that they had to sponsor more fund raising events in order to cover the \$50 per month spent on the new dental clinic.

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www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org, and typing your 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.

It's at 31 Downing Avenue in the borough



Although hundreds of people pass the house in the photo above every day, not one soul recognized it as 31 Downing Ave. in the borough. It was built by Herbert and Laura Ash, grandparents of Caroline Ash of the Chicago area, who provided the photo. Caroline said her grandparents waited until the house was completed around 1902 before they married. “My grandfather died in 1942 and my grandmother lived there until she died in 1965. In the early 1950's, they made the second floor an apartment. My parents (Herbert and Harriet Ash) moved into the first floor in 1966.”

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, Phil Dague, Rahn Brackin and Donna Capriotti.

Free ads for Non-Profits

Community Day in E. Brandywine

The East Brandywine Park and Recreation Commission's Community Day on Saturday, August 22 at the Community Park, 444 Dilworth Road, will begin with a 5 K Run, Walk & Kids Run for the Parks at 9:30 AM (See: <https://secondwind.webconnex.com/ebtparks5k>), followed by these events and activities from 11 AM to 3 PM. They will include antique and classic cars, crafters, vendors, great food, music, pony and hay rides, bingo, speed cup stacking, Shriners Clowns on Cycles, Stubby the Helicopter, police and fire demonstrations, Civil War cavalry, Chester County Sheriff's K9 Unit, karate demonstrations, Rita's Water Ice, fun tennis activities, plus lots of kids' stuff. New this year will be some members of the Uptown String Band, who will have costumes on display for you to see, touch, try on and have your picture taken. They will also perform some of their traditional mummies' songs. Organizations which want to be a part of this year's Community Day, contact Sandy Lammey or Dave Summers by leaving a message at the township office at 610-269-8230 or send an email to: parkandrec@ebrandywine.org.

Teri's Run

The 14th annual Teri's Run and Twilight Walk will be on Friday, September 12, beginning on Green Street in Downingtown. The event is dedicated to the memory of Downingtown's Teri Valocchi and all those who have lost their battle with Scleroderma. This year's Run will also raise funds for research and raise awareness of Chiari Malformation, Syringomyelia. The Run donated \$15,000 last year to the National Scleroderma Foundation, and it has raised over \$125,000 over the past 13 years for research into the cause and someday a cure for this debilitating disease. The Kids' Run begins at 6:30 PM, followed at 7 PM by the 5K Run and the 1.5 mile Walk. The deadline for pre-registering (\$25) is August 28. Registration cost after August 28 is \$30 for adults, \$20 for students 18 and under, and \$5 for the Kids Run. For more info, see: www.terisrun.org/

Caln Community Day

The Caln Township and the Caln Township Business Group are co-sponsors of the 9th annual Caln Community Day, from 11 AM to 3 PM on Saturday, Sept. 12 at the Caln Municipal Park in Thorndale. The event will include live entertainment, food, a children's area, flea market sponsored by the Thorndale United Methodist Church and much more. New this year will be a Caln Police vs Thorndale Fire Department softball game at 2 PM.

Candlelight Dinner

Downingtown Borough's Historic Commission is holding a Log House Candlelight Dinner for 4 raffle to benefit the placement of the Minquas Cannon at the Veterans Memorial in Kerr Park. Winner will win a Dinner for 4 people at the Log House in early November. The dinner will be catered by St. Anthony's Restaurant. Ticket cost: \$50. To purchase tickets, please contact Val at Borough Hall via: Vdiluigi@downingtown.org or 610-269-0344, ext. 200.

Lions Golf Tournament

A Lionville Lions Club's golf outing will be held on Monday, August 17 at the Downingtown Country Club. Registration begins at 7:30 AM, with coffee & Dunkin' Donuts, followed by an 8:30AM "Shotgun Start". The cost of the event is \$100. This price includes 18 holes of golf including cart, refreshments on the greens and an all-you-can-eat buffet. Awards for Closest-to-the-Hole and 1st and 2nd place Teams will be presented during lunch. Checks can be made out to: Lions Golf Tourney and mailed to: Lionville Lions Club, 6 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, PA 19335. Deadline for the receipt of checks is August 3rd. Proceeds from this event will help support the Chester County Association for the Blind, the Downingtown Lord's Pantry, Downingtown Senior Center, and other Lions charities.

Blood Drive

There will be a Red Cross drive from 1-6 PM on Friday, Aug. 21 at Downingtown Borough Hall annex building. See www.downingtown.org to register.

Art & Craft Show

Downingtown Borough's Historic Commission will hold its annual Log House Art & Craft Show on Saturday, September 19, from noon – 4 PM at Kerr Park. Spaces are \$25. Vendor applications and information can be found on the website: www.downingtown.org/LogHouseArtCraftShow.html

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.

Joseph's People, Downingtown chapter

An ecumenical support mission to help unemployed or underemployed people. The group is entirely conducted by volunteers, and has been at St. Joseph's since 1995. Meets at 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays 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.

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.