



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. 6, No. 49

December 3, 2015

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the building on the left in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your response to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

What area residents were talking about in the spring of 1924

Noted below are news items originally published in *The Archive* 91 years ago:

- Twenty-four state police officers, travelling in 12 patrol cars from the Lancaster barracks, swept into Downingtown on the evening of March 5, 1924, and conducted a synchronized raid at **11 alleged “booze joints and speakeasies,”** made 14 arrests, and confiscated three truckloads of liquor. The liquor was found in “pint bottles, quart jars, tin cans, green jugs, varnish cans, pails, kegs and every imaginable kind of receptacle.” All of the defendants, who were arraigned in Squire Wilmer Johnson’s office, and each of them was released on \$500 bail.
- Tommy Gray, who had served as the borough’s **police chief** for more than two decades until he retired in 1921, was unretired by Borough Council, replacing Elmer Ralston. The raid by state police, noted in the news item above, may have had something to do with Gray’s surprising return to the helm of the town’s police department.
- Adoption of **Daylight Savings Time (DST)** was a controversial issue across America back in the 1920s. And although all the railroads and most municipalities conformed to the adjusted time table, DST created problems in some communities. One of them was Downingtown, where the Downingtown Iron Works observed DST, but the Downingtown Paper Box Co. and the Frank Miller Paper plant decided to remain on Standard Time.
- William Levi “Buck” Taylor, who was America’s first King of the Cowboys when he was a major star in **Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show**, died in Chester County Hospital. Taylor and his family had lived in East Brandywine after he retired from show business. For more info on Taylor’s life, see: <http://coffeewithken.blogspot.com/2011/07/guest-blogger-amy-arden-on-buck-taylor.html>
- With late-season, nail-biter wins over Coatesville and West Chester, the DHS boys’ basketball team won the **Chester County championship**. Members of the team were George “Dink” Irwin, Charles “Reds” Deets, captain Carl Smith, Lew Laird and Earl Drake.
- A majority of **East Caln** voters were in favor of all township students attending schools in the Downingtown system, and the Bell School was closed.

What was going on here more than 100 years ago

Noted below are snippets of early local history republished in *The Archive* in the 1920s:

1893: The new Chestnut Street bridge, over the Pennsylvania Railroad tracks, was opened in Downingtown.

1896: The “greatest and most successful bicycle parade,” involving more than 150 bicycles, was staged in Downingtown.

1897: High Mass was observed at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church, in honor of the removal of the remains of former pastors Rev. Nicholas Bowden and Rev. Thomas Toner from the church yard in the Johnstown section of the borough, to the new cemetery on Glenside Road in West Bradford Township. The transfer of their remains was in compliance with a late 19th Century ordinance, forbidding burials within the borough.

1901: Although 75 houses had been constructed that year in the borough, there still was a housing shortage in Downingtown. The shortage was primarily due to so many people, who had been hired by the Cohansy Glass Works on Chestnut Street, couldn’t find lodgings in the borough.

Vintage ad of the week:

Still Doing Business At The Old Stand !

1765



1923

The tract on which this mill stands was sold from the "Aston Terrace" Property by George Aston to Rodger Hunt in 1739. The road in front of mill was laid out in 1752 and run from Center Square to Lancaster, passing by Nine Dozen and Caln Meeting House. Present Mill was built in 1765, and has been in continuous operation since that time.

The first addition made in that time being a Roller Process Flour Mill, added by John T. Pollock. The old mill stones still used in the mill are of the same type Samson pulled for the Philistines, and for the quality of work done have never been improved upon. Presto! The twentieth century craze for speed; an up-to-date Electric Mill has been added by the present owner, but without removing the old stones. On these stones was ground some of the flour used by the American soldiers at Valley Forge.

To the north, and within sight of the Mill, there still exists over 200 feet of trenches thrown up by Revolutionary soldiers about the time of the Battle of the Brandywine.

Anyone interested in the old landmarks of Colonial history are welcome to visit the Mill at any and all times.

POLLOCK'S FEED MILL

This ad was published in a 1923 edition of the Downingtown Archive.

Interesting local news 67 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local newspapers in early May 1948:

- School directors representing seven townships in the Downingtown area had a dinner meeting with members of the Downingtown School Board to discuss the **consolidation of their schools** into one school district. A representative of the State Department of Public Instruction explained the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation, under provisions outlined in Act 361, which were suggested, but not mandated.

- The **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** revealed that the Cardinal Cottons Corp. had purchased a site on West Lancaster Avenue in the borough, and planned to move its dress manufacturing plant there, from Maytown, PA. Cardinal officials said they would move machinery to Downingtown immediately and ultimately would employ 50 women here.

- An SRO crowd attended the **Spring Choral Concert** at the Junior-Senior High School. A DHS octette, comprised of Netha Beumer, Marguerite Ciarlone, Mena Cozzone, Eleanor Detterline, Mary Graden, Shirley Habecker, Caroline Saylor, and Margaret Sciarretta, sang four pieces. And fourth graders from West Ward School, who danced while the mixed chorus performed, included: Robert Detterline, Harry Flinn, Bobby Hamilton, Lee Rowland, Kathleen D'Attilio, Connie Osborne, Mary Jane Perella and Barbara Warren.

- These **Marshallton School** students, who were to graduate in June, went on the PTA's annual sightseeing trip in West Chester: Mary Jane Place, James Sweeney, Robert Sellers, Verna Hall, William Baldwin, David Lambert, Donald frame, Pearl Boggs, Dorothy Whiteman, Barbara Ferguson and June Ellingsworth.

- The **Alert Fire Co. Auxiliary** won a \$25 prize for their appearance in a parade in Reading. The 52 women wore white uniforms with blue and red caps and capes. And the 40 men from the fire department, who also marched in the parade, also wore new uniforms.

- The **Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission** unveiled plans for the \$70 million, 100-mile extension of the state's "high-speed, superhighway" system, from Carlisle to King of Prussia, included an exit at Route 100 in Uwchlan Township.

- The **VFW's Downingtown post** planned to establish a drum and bugle corps.

Restaurant Raffle winners announced

Victoria Goodfellow told her husband, Dr. Hank Pollock, that they should buy a ticket for the Historical Society's third annual Restaurant Raffle because she often has been "very lucky." Goodfellow was incredibly lucky on Sunday afternoon, when board member Harry Helms drew her ticket, and won \$1,400 worth of dinners at seven great, local restaurants.

As a result, the Pollocks received \$200 vouchers for meals at these restaurants: Amani's BYOB, St. Anthony's Restaurant, The General Warren Inn, The Kimberton Inn, The Orangery, The Bordley House Grille and The Downingtown Country Club.

And Mary Holleran won the second prize, a \$50 gift certificate for the Pomodoro Pizza and Italian Restaurant in Downingtown and two bottles of wine from Phoenixville's Black Walnut Winery.

Proceeds from the raffle will enable the Historical Society to continue its efforts to repair the leaking stone walls of Ashbridge House, its 306-year-old headquarters on Route 30 in East Caln Township.

It's at 1335 W. Strasburg Road in Marshallton



Built in 1912, after the Knights of Pythias Hall had burned down on that site, the building on the left has had an interesting history over the past 103 years. Ed Hill informs us that it was a Farmers & Mechanics Building, as well as a Town hall where township meetings and election polls took place. The first of many people who remembers it as the Grange Hall was Brad Titus. Also, several folks recall when it was used by Boy Scout Troop 52. And Marilyn Martin says it was a dance hall. Currently, it's the Merchant of Menace Art Gallery.

We need more volunteers for Clip Joint session on Sunday, Dec. 6

For those who are seeking a pleasant, relaxing experience on Sunday December 6, we have the answer. Our next Clip Joint session will be held from 1-4 PM on Sunday, December 6 at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, next to the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. You can come and depart at your convenience.

Uwchlan Historical Commission seeks members

Uwchlan Township Historical Commission has openings for three new volunteers. Residents or Uwchlan Township property owners are eligible to place applications to become members of the Commission.

Prospective members should be available for the following:

- Attend monthly Board meetings on the second Thursday at 7:30 PM (except for the month of December).
- Help with historical interpretation of two Township-owned facilities, welcoming visitors on the first Sunday of the month from April through November from 2 – 4 PM. These facilities are the John Cadwalder House on North Village Avenue in the Uwchlan Township National Historic District and the Edith P. Moore one-room School nearby.
- Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Commission.
- Attend an interview with the Commission that includes your interest in local history and a written resume. Based on the interview, a recommendation will be passed on to the Board of Supervisors to make the final decision.

Please send a resume by email to chairperson Patricia D. Gaines (fpgaines@verizon.net) or to 204 Southside Circle, Downingtown, PA 19335. All resumes will be reviewed and a time will be set up for applicants to appear in person.

Officers of the Downingtown Area Historical Society are: Parry Desmond, president; Ernie Jameson, vice president; Marion Piccolomini, recording secretary and Carol Grigson, treasurer. The board of directors includes: Harry Helms, Mike Dunn, Francine Dague, Phil Dague, Donna Capriotti and Annette Bethke.

Our Wish List

The items listed below in our Wish List notes the materials with a Downingtown connection, the Historical Society especially needs to reach its archival goals.

- A copy of Barbara Carlson Travaglini's History of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Downingtown.
- All DHS yearbooks published since 1964. And any yearbooks or newspapers published by DHS, or by Downingtown and Lionville Junior High Schools.
- Any printed materials related to: the Downingtown Young Whippets, Downingtown Little League, Downingtown Babe Ruth League or the Downingtown American Legion Baseball teams, and the Downingtown Girls' Softball League, the Lionville Youth Association, the West Bradford Youth Association, or the East Brandywine Youth Athletics.

If you need more info about any of these requests, please send an email to:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Here's how YOU can receive a Hist-O-Gram every week

If you occasionally receive a pass-along copy of our Hist-O-Gram from a subscriber, you can receive a copy of our FREE Hist-O-Grams every week by accessing our website:

www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.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.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html.

Free Ads for Non-Profits

Candlelight Tour

There will be a Candlelight Tour at Hibernia Mansion in Hibernia Park, on Park Road, Coatesville, from 6:30 PM to 9 PM on Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5, and from 2 PM to 4 PM on Sunday December 6. There will be refreshments and having live holiday music. Also, Santa Claus will be there. Admission is \$5; children under 12 are free. For more info, call 610-383-3812.

Borough Christmas Activities

Santa will be at the Log House on East Lancaster Avenue from 1-4 PM on Saturday, December 5. The event will be hosted by the Downingtown Historic Commission. And the Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Parade, with eight marching bands, will be held on Lancaster Avenue at 3 PM on Saturday, December 12. For details, see: www.dtownchristmas.com/.

House Tour

Friends of Chester Springs Library will have a Christmas House Tour on Saturday, Dec. 6. The tour offers eight stops, which range from a historic, 60-acre estate to two one-room school houses. The self-guided tour runs from 1-4:30 PM, with a reception from 4:30 to 6 PM at Montgomery School, 1141 Kimberton Road (Route 113), Chester Springs. Tickets at \$45 are available in advance only. For information, visit www.friends-csl.com

Tree Lighting

East Brandywine Township will have a Holiday Tree Lighting in the East Brandywine Community Park on Dilworth Road at 3 PM Sunday, December 6. Children will make ornaments and hang them on the tree. Refreshments: hot chocolate and cookies. Bring canned goods for the Lords Pantry, or hats and gloves for the Salvation Army, and you'll get a chance to "throw the switch" and light the tree.

Talbots helps Library

Talbots will donate to the Downingtown Library 10% of pre-tax sales on purchases at its store, Brandywine Square, 1096 E. Lancaster Ave., East Caln, from 3 PM to 9 PM Thursday, December 10.

Craft Show

Chester County Library, Exton Square, will have its 5th annual Craft Show from 10 AM-3 PM Saturday, Dec. 12. Vendors will be set up throughout the library to display and sell their crafts.

Wreaths Across America

Hopewell Cemetery, at 852 Hopewell Road, Downingtown, will be the site of the Wreaths Across America program at 11 AM on Saturday, December 12. This is a national day of recognition where wreaths are placed on the graves of veterans across the country, and this will be the second year that Hopewell has participated. You are invited to come and help or observe this incredible site. If you have a veteran relative buried at Hopewell and you would like to place their wreath, contact Linda Mento at OCityLinda@aol.com or call 484-798-5520.

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 reasonable. Call 610-269-3555 for more information.