



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

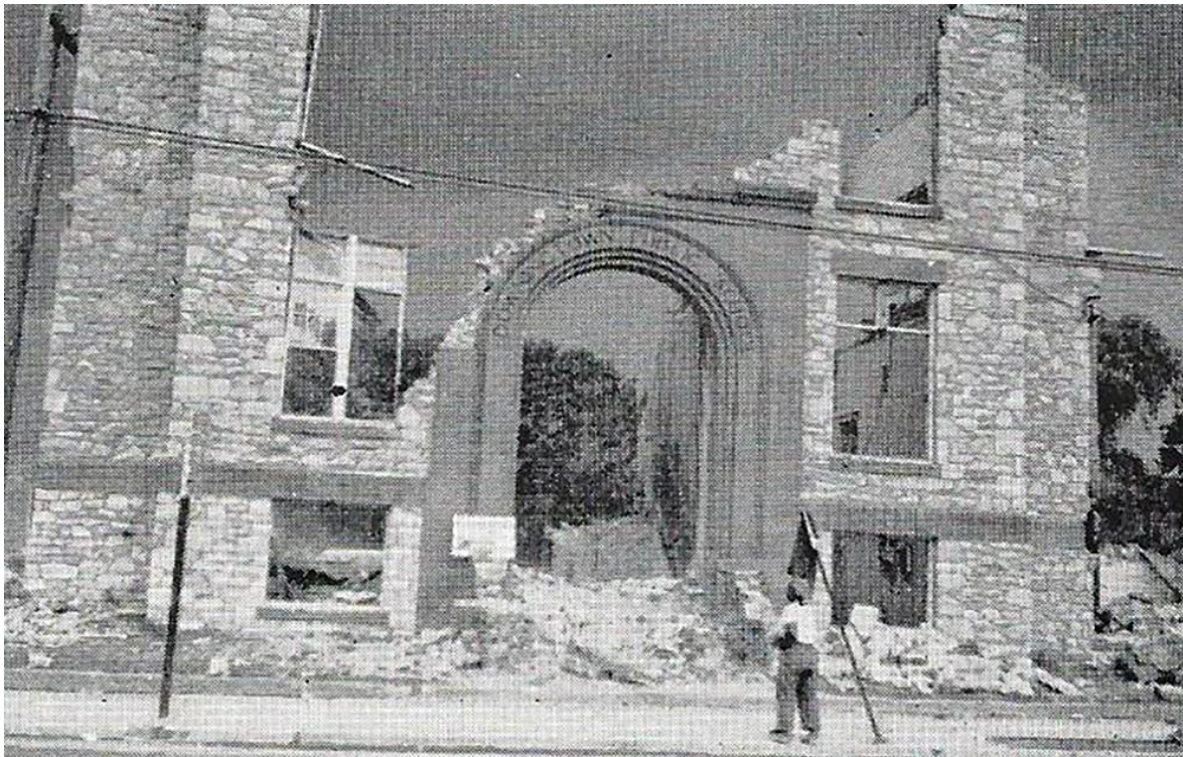
www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

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 purpose and location of the building in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

What area residents were talking about 52 years ago

Noted below are snippets of news, retrieved from local papers in the early part of February 1963.

The **Downingtown Area Elementary School Board** found temporary facilities for an additional 150 students projected to enroll in the system next fall. They included: one room at the West Bradford Fire Co to house the Marshallton School's kindergarten, three rooms at the Alert Fire Co. in Downingtown; plus the multi-purpose room at East Ward was to be converted into two classrooms.

Members of the recently formed **Civil War Buffs** group at DHS were Michael Dorsey, John Miller, Charles Alexander, Allen Davis, Clifford Murduagh, John Getty, Richard Walton, Bert Nordblum, James Partlow, Stephen Pollock, George Dilworth, Eric Wasmuth, Scott Echols, Edward Hildebeitel, Daniel Yost and Robert Hackman. Howard Caskey was the faculty advisor.

Elected to serve as trustees at **East Brandywine Baptist Church** were Robert Arters, Leon Faddis, Everett Henderson, Joseph McFalls, Elmer Moore, Francis Summers and William McFalls Jr. Chosen to serve as deacons and deaconesses were Norman Horner, Tom McKeever, Robert Mertz, Asa VanLew, Alice Esworthy, Marian Heidelbaugh, William Shaw and Sandra Plank.

Downingtown's Borough Council agreed to apply for \$72,800 in federal assistance for the planning of an urban renewal project in the borough's central business district. Known as Downing Center, the project covered 14.2 acres. The package's net cost was projected to cost \$509,000, and local participation's cost was estimated at \$153,400.

Junior High students of art teacher Rebecca Casner, whose work was displayed at the **Scholastic Art Award** competition in Lancaster, included Kathy Black, Gayle Collins, Joan Poffenbarger, Susan Just, Gertrude Williams, Alan Heughs, William Inslee, Joy Wertz and Bill Kline.

Scoutmaster Duane Spiese and members of **Troop 23**, sponsored by Central Presbyterian Church, Downingtown, who participated in a Boy Scout Sunday service were Harry Joyner, Robert Kangas, Mike Norris, James Jarvis, Thomas Hickey, Philip Garnett, Gary Stern, Robert Norris, Joe Hilton and Harry Foreman.

Members of the cast of the **Junior Class play** at DHS included Bob Poore, Deirdre Collins, June Williamson, Stephen Pollock, Kenneth Matthews, Geoff Roehrs, Mary Ellen Crosby, Ronald Renshaw, Connie Smedley, Carol Weiler, Sharon Donaghy, Mary Jane Wagner, Linda McElroy, Isabelle Scarborough, Fern Murray, Roger Geisel, Diane Gindin, Raymond Barry, Ralph Kurash and Kenneth Jordon.

New members of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** were Mrs. Robert Crook, Mrs. Joel Gee, Lucille Dampman, Mrs. Thomas Brookover Jr., Mrs. Donald Schwartz, Mrs. James Brown, Mrs. Orville March, Jane DelPaggio, Mrs. Rosaline Shepherd, Mrs. Lawrence Jamieson and Mrs. Robert Kucker.

Elected as trustees at **Fairview Presbyterian Church**, Glenmoore, were Walter Hadfield, Austin Reeser and Robert Ford; and elected as members of the session were Charles Alexander, Claude Werntz and Foster Ranck. Ray Sheeler and Roy Cummins were re-elected to the board.

David Fennelly of Boy Scout Troop 115, sponsored by St. Joseph's Church, and James Duca, of Troop 2, sponsored by Downingtown Methodist Church, were installed as **Eagle Scouts**.

Several residents of Mount Airy Drive in Uwchlan petitioned the township's supervisors to change the name of the street to **Peck Road**, because the Peck family was the first to settle in that area, in the late 18th Century.

Samuel Acker of Chester Springs was named the state's Outstanding Young Farmer by the Pennsylvania Jaycees.

The **DHS boys' basketball team** lost an overtime game, 61-60, to Kennett, the defending Southern Chester County champions. The Whippets were led by Clarence Wilkerson, 20 points, and George Murphy, 17.

Leaders elected by the congregation of **Windsor Baptist Church** in Eagle were Walter Styer, vice moderator; Mrs. Clarence Rice, treasurer; Mrs. Warren Supplee, church clerk; Mrs. John Krisch, assistant church clerk; George Benham, financial secretary; Vinton Ash, organist; and Carolyn Supplee, assistant organist.

When traveling was done in 'stages'

Dr. Bill King, DHS grad and retired dentist who's now living in a retirement community in northern Arkansas, recently donated several interesting books to the Historical Society's library at Ashbridge House.

One of them—*The Great Wagon Road, From Philadelphia to the South*—includes a lot of interesting information on travel between Philadelphia and Lancaster, a 66-mile trip, in the 18th Century.

When faster, five-passenger stagecoaches started replacing covered wagons in the 1780s, horses were changed at "stages." The stages usually were taverns, such as the one operated by the Downing family in the building now occupied by the Pook and Pook auction house at the corner of Lancaster and Uwchlan Avenues in the borough. By 1800, there were so many stages along the road between Philadelphia and Lancaster, they averaged about one every mile.

Stagecoaches departing from Philadelphia and destined for Lancaster usually began their trip at 2 AM. And they typically reached Downings Town, the half-way point, by nightfall. After an overnight stay at the Downing tavern, it took another 12-18 hours to reach Lancaster. The wide variance in travel time was determined by how muddy the roadway was.

After the American Revolution, states began to charter private turnpike companies, since most state governments didn't have enough funds to build "highways." The first stone-surfaced turnpike was completed in 1792. It took two years to construct the Philadelphia-Lancaster Turnpike, at a cost of \$465,000.

Members of St. Joseph's Church were dramatic in 1928

The Dramatic Club of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Downingtown, put on a production of "The Left Overs" at the Roosevelt Theatre on Brandywine Avenue in the borough in April 1928, according to a program, recently donated to the Historical Society.

The comedy's cast included: John Donnelly, Mary Mahan, Neil Sheridan, Roselyn Kane, Andy Mento, Fred Simone, Teresa Francella, Margaretta Mahan, Peg Bray and Jack Welsh, who also was the director. Celia Dougherty was manager of the two and one-half hour production.

A "special musical number" was provided by A. Travaglini between the second and third acts.

Issues of *Lions Pride* donated to Historical Society

Philip Hemcher, DHS Class of 1979, recently donated two editions of the *Lions Pride*, a newspaper put out by Lionville Junior High School students.

The January 1976 issue noted that the newspaper's staff that year included: Annette DiRenzi, editor; Maureen Murtaugh, co-editor; and Mitzi Cole, secretary.

That edition also noted:

- Winners of the ninth grade typing contest were Kathy Williams, fastest girl, 52 words per minute; and Ed Trost, fastest boy, 38 wpm.
- Students in the new Contemporary Industrial Technology course, for those who wanted to make industrial arts their career, included Tom Lance, Todd Walton, Jack Smith, John Miller, John Stine, Matt Roussel, Ron Crossley, Mike Quimet, Carl Schaubert and Robert Popjoy.
- Soloists in the band's Christmas Concert were Joan Ridings, Kathi TenHoopen, Margie Caldwell and Matt Ladd.
- Swimmers who participated in a winter training program were Scott and Lee McIntyre, Jennifer and Charles Messa, Mike Palski, Lori Zwack, Sue Howley, Laura Zempel and Melanie Wix.

The April 1975 edition, which was edited by Frances DiFuria, included these news items:

- Members of the Foreign Language Club, who wore costumes to the Mardi Gras party, were Daniele Obendorfer, Lori Schwabenbauer, Stephanie Forgione, Mike Whitman, and grand prize winner Tina Porter.
- Students who had major roles in the school play, *Hip Hippie Hooray*, included Tracy O'Connell, Mike Walker, Kathy Stelzer, Mark DiSilets, Sean Roberts, Mike Whiteman, Sue Sten, Helen Maragakes, Ray Obendorfer and Matt Ladd.
- Players on the varsity boys' basketball team, which had a 6-7 record, included Bob Linton, Dave Ranieri, Steve Kolar, Rick Grubb, Craig Thompson, Mark Feller, Mike Ficca, Drew Parvin, Bill Minahan, Dave Farling, Tripp Carey and Don Sample.

(Editor's Note: We'd love to publish more tidbits from student newspapers put out by the Junior Highs and Middle Schools, as well as DHS. So if you wish to donate copies of those newspapers (or any other published materials related to Downingtown Area School District activities) to us, please contact us via: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.)

Clip joint will be open this Sunday

The Historical Society's Clip Joint will be open from 1-4 PM on Sunday, March 1. So if you want to spend a delightful afternoon on Sunday, catching up on the local gossip, as well as clipping and pasting newspaper articles, you're invited to come to Ashbridge House, our 305-year-old headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available in the lot at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays. You're welcome to arrive and leave at your convenience.

It's the tenant house at 780 Marshall Road in Glenmoore



Shelley Francies, social studies teacher at DHS West, is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify the location of the house in the photo above as 780 Marshall Road in Glenmoore. Built in the mid-18th Century as part of William Farmstead, the most recent owners of the tenant house were Mr. and Mrs. Albert Greenfield.

Your friends and family can be Hist-O-Gram subscribers

Tired of forwarding copies of each week's Hist-O-Gram to friends and family? If you want any of them to become a subscriber to our FREE Hist-O-Grams, tell them to go to our website:

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org, and type their 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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

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 and Rahn Brackin.

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

Lecture on Colonial Taverns

The East Brandywine Historical Commission will present a lecture on Colonial Taverns from 3:30-5 PM on Sunday, March 15 at Beaver Creek Tavern, 1350 Bondsville Road, Downingtown. There is no cost but you are welcome to order from their menu and/or enjoy a leisurely dinner after the program. Beer historian Rich Wagner will be available to autograph and purchase his book "Philadelphia Beer: A Healthy History of Brewing in the Cradle of Liberty." He will present information on a time when the taverns were the place to get the news, and there were four taverns in East Brandywine Township. For more information: CarolSinex@gmail.com, 484 237-8071.

Spirit Night at Chick-Fil-A

20% of sales at the Chick-Fil-A restaurants in Downingtown (Ashbridge Square) and Upper Uwchlan (Eagleview Blvd.) from 5:30 to 8 PM on Tuesday, March 5 will be donated to the Downingtown Library. A flyer-coupon for the event can be downloaded from the Library's website, www.downingtowntownlibrary.org, or be picked up at the Downingtown Library.

Registration for soccer players with special needs

The Glenmoore Eagle Youth Association's HIGH 5 soccer program will be held at Fellowship Field #1, 241 Fellowship Road, Chester Springs, from 3-4 PM on Saturdays, from April 11 to May 30. This free program is for players between 5 and 19 years of age who have special needs. We need teens and adults to volunteer as "buddies" to work one-on-one with players. No soccer experience necessary -- just enthusiasm! For more info and to register, go to: www.geyasoccer.org

5K race for Downingtown Library

The Readers on the Run 5K race and a 1 Mile walk, plus a Kids Dash will be held on Green Street in Downingtown on Saturday morning, April 11. The races will benefit the Downingtown Library. For details and to register on line, go to: <http://library5k.secondwindtiming.com> or you can pick up a registration form at the new Downingtown Library on Wallace Avenue.

Point-to-Point Race

The 73rd running of the Brandywine Hills Point-to-Point race will be held on Sunday, April 5 at the Brandywine Valley Association's Myrick Conservation Center, on Route 842, between Unionville and West Chester. Gates open at 10 AM. First race: 11:30 AM. General admission is \$20 per carload. For more info, see: www.brandywinewatershed.org/pointtopoint.

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.