



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. 6

February 5, 2015

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the 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 Downingtown people were talking about 97 years ago

Noted below are snippets of information originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* during the winter of 1918, when the U.S. was involved in World War I.

U.S. Army personnel apparently were guarding the **Pennsylvania Railroad** property in Downingtown, a newspaper article noted that one of the soldiers on duty there accidentally shot himself in the chest without any serious consequences. The soldiers were quartered at an encampment near the Trestle Bridge.

The **Downingtown Library** was asking residents to donate books and magazines, to local men who were serving with military units in the U.S. and overseas.

The **Harbison-Walker** brick works announced plans to build 10 single homes for employees in the borough. Each of the five-room dwellings, cost \$2,500.

Tommy Gray, Downingtown's chief of police, had sought a headquarters for the borough's police force for years, but Borough Council ignored his requests. So, Gray took the matter into his own hands and purchased a property on West Lancaster Avenue, and apparently turned part of it into the Downingtown police station.

Rev. M. R. Heilig, pastor of **Messiah Lutheran Church**, Downingtown, was editor of the new, eight-page *Messiah Messenger*, a monthly publication.

Officers of the **Downingtown Home and School League** were Mrs. George Kerr, president; Mrs. Edward Bicking and Mrs. L. T. Bremmerman, vice presidents; Endora Freeman, secretary; and Mrs. Raymond Dennis, treasurer.

In its annual report for 1917, the **Downingtown Health Board** reported that it had fumigated 35 houses, and 91 homes were placarded with a quarantine notice due to a resident of those dwellings having a communicable disease.

There was serious coal shortage in February 1918. Hundreds of local families were without heat, and the **Miller Paper Co.** had to shut down due to the lack of coal. Downingtown schools were using soft coal, instead of the usual anthracite.

Rev. Elmer Walker, pastor of **Central Presbyterian Church**, Downingtown, was assigned to a three-month tour as a military chaplain at Camp Meade, MD.

The **Downingtown Men's Club** had shipped Christmas packages to 80 of the 86 local boys serving in the military; addresses for the other six were unknown. Officers of the club were Harry Raudenbush, president; Amos Moyer, first vice president; Edward Young, second vice president; B.F. Eckman, recording secretary; W. B. Stauffer, financial secretary; Evans Miller, assistant financial secretary; Joseph Miller, treasurer; Rev. Henry Noon, chaplain. The club's executive committee included Hunter Wills, Dr. L. T. Bremmerman, Gilbert McIlvaine, Chandler Roberts, Howard Baldwin, Frank Parke and Edgar Griffith.

Downingtown area news in August 1947

Noted below is information retrieved from local newspaper articles 68 years ago.

The **Ladies Auxiliary of the Alert Fire Co.** of Downingtown donated \$1,000 to the fundraising campaign for new uniforms for the **DHS marching band**.

Governor James Duff approved spending \$4.3 million on improvements at **Embreeville State Hospital**. The increased funding was to make a "real hospital" of the mental institution in West Bradford.

Proceeds from the **Chester County Baseball League's** all-star game, played at Kerr Park in Downingtown, were for the benefit of the league's injured players.

Committee chairman for the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's** programs and activities in 1947-48 were Jack Brownstein, retail; Ed Towson, transportation; Sam Charles, Christmas lighting; Creston Shoemaker, legislative; Dr. Charles Bruton, health and recreation; and Ray Sheeler, membership.

Uwchlan Township Republicans agreed to place these names on the ballot for the September election: George Thompson, supervisor; Edwin Smedley, school director; Emmet Gordon, auditor; Horace Roberts, judge of elections; James Thackeray, inspector of elections; and Isabel Acker, justice of the peace.

The office team won the softball playoff at the **Downingtown Manufacturing Co.'s** annual picnic at Lenape Park. Members of the winning squad included: Cliff Morrow, Andrew MacIntire, Francis Daylor, Grant LeFevre, Francis Merkt, Herb Smith, Horace Hill, Gerald Lyons, Bill Broschard and George Loomis. The team of Clyde Esworthy and James Miley won the quoit tournament; Charles Broomall and Ed Klunk came in second. And Norman and Helen Pannebaker took first in the "Sir Walter Raleigh" race. Also, Bobby Burns and Alvy Kelly won the three-legged race.

A man employee of a Paoli electric shop was fatally injured and a teenage helper was seriously burned, while they were installing a steeple-type TV antenna on the roof of **Sheehy's bar and restaurant** at 151 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. Rescue workers, supervised by local physicians Dr. Martin Neff and Dr. Norman MacKenzie, spent two hours trying to revive Walter Palmer, who was fatally shocked by 33,000 volts of electricity.

Members of the **Twin Valley 4-H Club**, who talked about their projects at a meeting of the **Uwchlan Grange**, included: Martha Matthews, home economics; Carl Ruth, pigs; Sam Supplee, tomatoes; Meredith Ruark, baby beef; and George Taylor, bees.

Winners of cash gate prizes at the Glen Moore Fire Co. Carnival were Lavern Simmers and Robert Shoemaker. Other prize winners were Thomas Reber, a Kelvinator refrigerator; Harry Evans, a Philco radio and record player; and Margaret Gabriel, a GE iron.

And a two-door, 1947 Chevy was the grand prize at the **Thorndale Fire Co. Fair**, which was held for eight nights.

Also, Margaret McGraw of Downingtown won the 1947 Oldsmobile, which was the grand prize at the fair co-sponsored by the Downingtown posts of the **American Legion** and the **VFW**.

Dickie Rice and Janet Hoffman, Hugh Follet and Florence Mulligan, and Alice and Bobby Trego won the bag race at **Windsor Baptist Church's** annual picnic. And winners of the three-legged races included Earl Garvine, Joe Styer, Elvin Hershey, Barbara Trego, and Dorothy and Milton Edwards.

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.

St. James Preschool celebrates 50th anniversary



St. James Preschool of Downingtown is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Members of the 1973 class and their teachers, shown in the photo above, were, left to right: front row, Amy Ireton and Todd McQueen; middle row, Jennifer Lyman, Dawn Regner, Mary Beth Reed, Cathy Eckman, Lisa Clay, Sandy Long, Kristen Colazzo; back row, Mrs. Julie DeRocco, Kevin McCool, Brian Wells, Jon Mitchell, Glen Butler, Chuckie Neald, Chipper Firestone, Michael Gaffney and Dora Cumens. Photo and children's names provided by Jenn Wagner.

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.

It's at 331 Little Washington Road in E. Brandywine



No one correctly identified the location of this stone house at 311 Little Washington Road in East Brandywine Township. The original part of the building was constructed in the mid-18th Century. For more info on the property, see: www.century21.com/property/311-little-washington-rd-downingtown-pa-19335-REN014545880.

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

Blood Drive

The Borough of Downingtown will hold a Red Cross Blood Drive from 1-6 PM on Friday, February 13 in the Annex Building of Downingtown Borough Hall, at 4 W. Lancaster Ave. For more info, see:

www.downingtown.org.

Lecture on Golda Meir

Ann Atkins, Historian and Author, will focus on Golda Meir's "True Grit, Later in Life," when she makes her second presentation at 7 PM Tuesday, February 17 at the West Caln Township Building, 721 W. Kings Highway, Wagontown. The meeting, sponsored by the West Caln Historical Society, is free and open to the public.

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.

5K race in Downingtown

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.

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.