



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

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

[www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](http://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 what local fire company's fire apparatus is shown in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your responses to [Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

### **What local people were talking about 52 years ago**

Noted below are snippets of news originally published in local newspapers in the early part of January 1963.

The Pickering-Brandywine Joint School Board revealed that it didn't want its elementary schools in East Brandywine, Wallace, Upper Uwchlan and West Pikeland Townships to be

administered by the **Downingtown Area Joint School Board**, under a consolidation package developed by the Chester County School Board. The controversial merger plan was to be placed on the ballot in the fall election.

Downingtown postmaster John Welsh reported that there had been a run on one-cent stamps because the postal rate on first class mail had risen from four cents to five cents, effective on January 6, and many people didn't want to get stuck with four-cent stamps. Local residents also bought one-cent stamps because postage for postcards and air mail also increased by a penny.

Elected to lead the **Ladies Auxiliary of the Minquas Fire Co.** were Rose Nichols, president; Liz Whitman, vice president; Doris Unruh, financial secretary; Edna Pendergast, chaplain; and Dot Peters, recording secretary.

Leaders of **Girl Scout Troop 57**, sponsored by St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lionville, were Jean Rice, Mrs. Donald Corneal, Mrs. Hugh Feeley, Mrs. John Barton and Mrs. Eric Bittmann.

Installed as council officers at **Messiah Lutheran Church**, Downingtown, were Rev. H. Raymond Jones, president; Ralph Ralston, vice president; Mrs. Laura Lenhardt, secretary; William Wessner, treasurer; Henry Kriebel, financial secretary; Irvin Geschwindt, finance; Andrew Roman, stewardship; Ray Kipp, worship and education; and William Keller, property.

Officers elected by members of the Evening Missionary Society at **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, included Mrs. Vernon Jameson, president; Mrs. Thomas Gabel, vice president; Mrs. James Manley, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Wilbur Felten, secretary; Mrs. Melba Lynn, treasurer; Mrs. Lawrence Emery, Christian social relations; Mrs. William Wick, spiritual life; Mrs. William Robb, love gift; Mrs. George Bell, leadership training; Mrs. Lawrence Dilworth, spiritual interest missionary; Mrs. Lydia McManus, literature; Mrs. Donald Shields, White Cross; Mrs. Henry Drumheller, sunshine; and Mrs. William Hayes, membership.

New officers of the Women's Association at **Central Presbyterian Church**, Downingtown, were Mrs. Leon Williams, president; Mrs. Nelson Norris, vice president; Mrs. Elton Weikel, secretary; Mrs. Robert Forrest, treasurer; Mrs. George Nordblum, programs; Mrs. Wallace Pearson, spiritual life; Mrs. Ira Buckwalter, world service; Mrs. Earl Stern, fellowship; Mrs. Killian Dixon, local church service; Mrs. Hallan Usher, Presbyterian Home secretary; and Mrs. Joseph Eby, Presbyterian Home assistant.

## Local news in the latter part of January 1979

Noted below are snippets of news originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* 36 years ago.

Many **East Brandywine** residents turned out for a supervisors' meeting after they read in a daily newspaper that small game hunting might be prohibited in the township. However, only banning deer hunting with high-powered rifles had been considered, and the supervisors said they didn't have the authority to restrict hunting. Only the state Game Commission could make that ruling for a second class township such as East Brandywine.

Mike Dunn, president of the **Minquas Fire Co.** in Downingtown, wanted to increase the size of the fire company's ambulance service so it could respond to all calls during the daytime, when most of the volunteer ambulance crew is at work. One of the ways to expand the service, said Dunn, was to recruit women.

Officers of the newly formed Rev. William Fenerty Knights of Columbus Council at **St. Joseph's Catholic Church** were John Francella, grand knight; Edward Maney, deputy grand knight; John Morris, chancellor; Edward Campagna, recorder; Peter Bonaduce, warden; Ben Scalia, recording secretary; James Rowan, treasurer; Joseph Wusinich, John Fiore and John Helm, trustees; Brian Formica, inside guard; and James McDonald, outside guard. Winners of the foul shooting contest, sponsored by the Knights of Columbus, were Mike McHugh, Mary Jacobson, Kevin Lyons, Chris Thomas, Billy Golden, Matthew Moran, Jennie Conahan, Bernadette Bonaduce and Maryellen Francella.

Elected as Sunday School officers at **Windsor Baptist Church** in Eagle were Jim Runyen, superintendent; Joe Cura, assistant superintendent and song leader; Gail Kuhlkin, secretary-treasurer; Deirdre Murdoch, assistant treasurer; Randy Shaw, librarian; and pianists Jenny Peterson, Rita German, Sandi Contner, Diane Fitzmier and Stan Miller.

**Boy Scout Troop 70**, Thorndale, planned to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a dinner at the east Brandywine fire hall. Founded in December 1928 under the sponsorship of the Caln School PTA; the troop was sponsored for the past 40 years by Thorndale Methodist Church.

Pins were recorded by Keith Grant, Jim Webb, Victor Cozzone, Dan Howard, Mike Marcocci, and Paul Sparklin, as the **DHS wrestling team** demolished Coatesville 59-6.

**Lionville Junior High's basketball team** clobbered Downingtown Junior High 48-18, as Mike Cominsky tallied 19 points for the Lions.

Elected as officers of the **East Brandywine Fire Co.** were John Piersol, president; John Neff, vice president; Ron Rambo, secretary; Lewis Laird, treasurer; Scott Piersol, membership secretary; Walt Crandall, trustee; Dr. Brent Follweiler, fire chief; and Tucker Thomas, fire police captain.

Recent **property transfers** included: 3210 Windsor Lane, Thorndale, \$52,900; 1196 Price Lane, West Bradford, \$46,900; 106 Hilltop Drive, East Brandywine, \$93,900; 708 Brainerd Road, Uwchlan, \$92,500; 221 William St., Downingtown, \$34,900; 2 Carriage Drive, Upper Uwchlan, \$71,700; 282 Creek Road, Wallace, \$60,000.

Elected as officers of the consistory of **St. Paul's UCC Church**, Lionville, were Joseph Moroney, president; Mrs. Gordon Ralph, vice president; and Mrs. Harman Rogers, secretary. Daniel Shoop was re-elected as head of the elders.

## Downingtown area news in early 1954

These news items were retrieved from the *Archive*, a Downingtown area weekly, 61 years ago.

Leon Gabel was elected president of **Downingtown Borough Council**. Other borough officials in 1954 were Robert McKinney, borough manager; Theodore Griffith, solicitor; William Walton, building inspector; and Howard Baldwin, treasurer.

Theresa Sciaretta, 219 Church St., Downingtown, won first place in Downingtown's outdoor Christmas decorating contest, sponsored by the **Chamber of Commerce**. Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Ax, 106 Webster Ave., came in second; and Mary Jane Detterline, 110 Brandywine Ave., took third place.

Mrs. George Fisher, secretary of the board, and Mary Rogers, librarian, were honored at a retirement dinner attended by members of the **Downingtown Library** board.

John Chilla was the hero when he sank a foul shot, and the **DHS basketball team** beat Tredyffrin-Easttown 36-35. And Dick Goudie scored 24 points, as the Whippets beat Coatesville 60-44. It was Downingtown's first win over the Red Raiders since 1945.

The **Downingtown A&P** was selling lobsters for 89 cents a pound, and boneless beef roasts cost 39 cents a pound.

Patience Kinloch led the **DHS girls' basketball team** with 24 points, as the Whippettes edged Bridgeport 41-40.

Officers of the **Downingtown Teener Baseball League** were Tom Courtless, president; Robert Plank, vice president; Orville Brammer, secretary; and Herman Faucett, treasurer.

## **Marble was quarried in the Exton area**

The Thomas Marble Quarry, established in the Exton area in 1833, was "easily the most famous industry to ever operate in West Whiteland," according to the township Historical Commission's application to have the site placed on the National Historic Landmarks and National Register of Historic Places.

The marble "might have lain dormant for centuries" if the Columbia Railroad had not begun to provide service between the Exton area and Philadelphia (initially via the West Chester Railroad) several months after marble was discovered on the John R. Thomas farm on South Whitford Road.

The quarry closed in 1844, after marble from the Thomas property was used to construct Girard College in Philadelphia. That building was designed by Thomas U. Walter, the Philadelphia architect best known for designing the iron dome on the U.S. Capitol in Washington, DC, as well as several significant buildings in West Chester.

The quarry was reopened in 1867, when steam-powered was used to cut the stone, and keep the quarry free of water. But the operation had to be shut down when the quarry filled with water. In more recent years, the quarry was used as a private swim club.

## **Historical Society of Pennsylvania evaluated our archives**

Two project surveyors from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP), located in Philadelphia, spent nearly two days this past summer at the Downingtown Area Historical Society's headquarters to check our Archives, as part of a survey of the "Hidden Collections Initiative for Pennsylvania Small Archival Repositories," in the five-county Philadelphia region. The repositories include volunteer-run historical institutions, museums, fraternal and ethnic organizations, community groups, churches, clubs, and other non-profit organizations with important archival collections. The project is funded by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

You can access the HSP project surveyors' perspectives on our archives, after they visited Ashbridge House, at: <http://hsp.org/blogs/archival-adventures-in-small-repositories/downingtown-industrial-hub>.

## **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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html).

## **It's at 681 Boot Road, Downingtown**



No one correctly identified the location of the house in the photo above as being at 681 Boot Road, Downingtown. For more info on the property, see: [www.homesnap.com/PA/Downingtown/681-Boot-Road](http://www.homesnap.com/PA/Downingtown/681-Boot-Road).

## **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](mailto: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.downingtowntn.org](http://www.downingtowntn.org).

### ***Brochure on DARC Classes & Activities***

You can gain access to the latest DARC brochure, listing all classes and activities, at: [www.darcinfo.com](http://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](http://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](mailto:JPCheryl@verizon.net).