



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. 30

July 23, 2015

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@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

What local residents were talking about 36 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in the East Branch Citizen in the early part of August 1979.

- It appeared that the projected September 10 completion date of the eight-room addition to DHS and the commitment to finish the new high school gymnasium by October 10 were not going to be met. The causes for the delays, according to Dr. Charles Micken, superintendent of schools, and representatives of T. A. Armbruster, the general contractor, were: unusually rainy weather, the inability of construction workers to drive to the job site due to the gas crisis, strikes delaying delivery of glazed brick from Texas, and the general contractor's submission of inadequate drawings to the steel fabricator. The construction contract included a \$500 penalty for every delayed day. But Micken didn't foresee any particular problems in housing students in the meantime. There would be continued use of areas, such as conference rooms, for classes until the addition was finished. And PE classes would be conducted outside during most of the fall, weather permitting, as usual.

- East Caln supervisors approved plans for the new **Downingtown United Methodist Church** on East Lancaster Avenue.

- The coalition opposing the showing of x-rated movies at the Marchwood Theatre was considering picketing the theatre in the **Marchwood Shopping Center**. Also, the coalition's lawyer filed a petition to intervene (join) in a suit that was filed by Bernard Hankin, owner of the shopping center, against Cinema Arts Inc., the theatre operator. Hankin claimed that the lease was re-assigned by the original tenant to Cinema Arts without his permission.

- Scottie Nengel tossed a three-hitter in a 4-1 victory over Railway Park of Pottsville, Kevin Beaupit hit a two-run double, allowed just three hits, and had nine strikeouts, as the **Lionville Little League** team became one of the four teams to earn a shot at the state title in Latrobe, by beating East Norriton 8-2 in an inter-district play. Two days earlier, Scottie Nengel led his team when he tossed a three-hitter in a 4-1 victory over Railway Park of Pottsville. .

- **Margaretta Helm** was celebrating her 66th year as organist for St. Joseph's Catholic Church. She started at age 11. Helm began her long career as a private piano and organ teacher, right after she earned a degree in music at the University of Pennsylvania in 1923.

- Winners in the decoupage competition at the **Lionville playground** were Karin DiDonato, Amy and Jon Lefko, Colleen Fisher, Angela Lewis, Kathy Wethman, Rick Poole, Joel Miller, Michelle McNally, Lisa Lewis and Chris Reilly.

- Officers of the **Wheel and Dealer Square Dance Club** were Roger and Dot Wight, president; George and Dot Roepe, vice president; Len and Maryann Keen, vice president; Nevin and Erma Bloss, treasurer; Burt and Jan Bates, secretary; and Ethel Moyer, reporter. The club, which danced at Uwchlan Hills School, was sponsored by the Downingtown-Uwchlan Recreation Commission.

- **Pennypacker Country Club** won its 11th Brandywine Swim League championship. Pennypacker's Becky Messa and Ron Ungvary, who each earned five gold medals, were named the most valuable swimmers.

- **West Pikeland Township's** building was jammed when the supervisors considered buying six acres on its eastern border for \$27,000. The land was contiguous with the 68 acre-tract the township bought for about \$150,000 in 1976, through the Pickering and French Creek Conservation Trust Inc.

- John Foster and Paula West won the singles championships at **Pennypacker's Junior Tennis Tournament**.
- Brandywine Savings and Loan won the **Downingtown-Lionville Babe Ruth Minor League** title for the second straight year by beating Pepperidge Farm 4-1. In addition to pitching the entire game, Dan Dougherty also was the S&L squad's top hitter for the season with a .514 average.
- Recent **property transfers** included: 34 Blakely Road, East Brandywine, \$96,085; 214 Brecknock Terrace, West Whiteland, \$43,000; 540 Norwood Road, Uwchlan, \$77,000; 1322 Kerwood Lane, West Bradford, \$54,180; 350 Mary Street, Downingtown, \$35,000; 4 South Woodmont Drive, East Caln, \$93,000.
- The team of Fred Davison, John Miller, Monica Bailey, Becca Spinks, Steve and Mike Painter, and Margaret Orth won the capture the flag contest at **Wagenseller Park playground** in Wallace Township.
- **Bob Wagner's Mill Carpet** store was moved to 4531 W. Lancaster Ave. in Caln, just west of the Downingtown borough border.
- Members of the Downingtown team, which finished second in the **Chester County Team Tennis** competition, included Marc and Lisa Warnick, Ken Burkey, Cindy Dunleavy, Jane Gerlach, Andy and Chris Lefko, and Sean Anderson. They were coached by Millie Dunleavy.

News items originally published 67 years ago

Noted below are news items retrieved from local newspaper published in January 1948.

- Housing for World War II vets and their families was discussed at a meeting of the Charles F. Moran **American Legion Post**. Vets seeking housing were asked to complete an application, so the Legion had better perspective on that issue. And Leon Gable reported that he had contacted representatives of the American Stores, Inc. about the possibility of leasing space on the first floor of the proposed Post home, to be built on the recently purchased property on Pennsylvania Avenue, near Wallace Avenue, in the borough. Also discussed were a membership drive, chaired by Walter Crandall; new uniforms for the firing squad attending veterans' funerals; and plans for the fair, co-sponsored by the **Downingtown VFW Post 845**, to be held in July. The VFW was making final plans to move into its new Post home on West Lancaster Avenue in early February.
- The **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** had its first annual banquet at the Alert Fire Hall. Dr. Charles Swope, president of West Chester State Teachers College was the featured speaker and Creston Shoemaker was the master of ceremonies. The Chamber's activities in 1947 included sponsorship of the Miss Chester County Beauty Pageant, additional parking in the borough's business district, sending a borough Boy Scout to a jamboree in France, and the borough's Christmas program.
- Officers re-elected to the board of the **Brandywine Building and Loan** were: Arthur Glauner, president; S. F. MacDonald, vice president; Wilmer C. Johnson, secretary; Richard Warren, treasurer; and Theodore Griffith, solicitor.
- Members of **Central Presbyterian Church** who were recognized for perfect Sunday School attendance were: Mr. and Mrs. Norman Pannebaker and their children, Norman Jr. and Helen; Harry Flinn, George Lowe, Mrs. Anna Lowe, Helen Eachus, Virginia Nixdorf and Mrs. Earl Hadfield.

- Re-elected as directors of the **Downingtown Library** were Mrs. Gibson McIlvain, Anna McIlvaine Miller, Dr. Thomas Parke, William McFarlan, Theodore Griffith, Joseph Huggins and Mrs., George Fisher. In the business session, it was noted that a new heating system had to be installed and the roof probably would have to be installed in the spring. Circulation totaled 11,027, and there were 918 members.

- Sixty-eight employees, with 10 or more years of service with the **Collins and Aikman** “plush mill” on Bondsville Road in East Brandywine, were entertained with a dinner at the Mansion House Hotel in West Chester, followed by a bus trip to Philadelphia to see a musical comedy at the Locust Street Theatre.

- New members of the **Auxiliary of the Alert Fire Co.** were Mrs. William Harrison, Clara Bond, Mrs. Creston Shoemaker, Alice and Helen Doran, and Mrs. Harry Peoples.

- Elected to **Messiah Lutheran Church’s** Council were Mark Shaw, Joseph Streamer, Henrich Reutter and Frank Knauer. Other members of the Council were Arthur Glauner, Leon Dickinson, Claire Skiles, Hathaway Frain, Dr. Frank Lenhardt, Dr. George Bousum, Charles Ax and Emerson Glauner.

- The **DHS boys’ basketball team** threw a scare into the Henderson Warriors when the Whippets had a 24-23 lead at halftime. However, the West Chester cagers rallied with a 13-point surge in the last three minutes in the contest, and won by a 50-40 margin. Downingtown’s top scorers were Danny Barrow, 15 points, and Vince Massimini, 13. And Coach Hank Goudie’s Papertowners beat St. Agnes of West Chester 42-39 in a close clash. That victory countered the Stags’ 41-37 win over Downingtown several weeks earlier. Massimini was the Whippets’ leading scorer, with 19 points.

Items published in *The Downingtown Archive* 61 years ago

Here are several news items, which were originally published in *The Downingtown Archive* in August 1954.

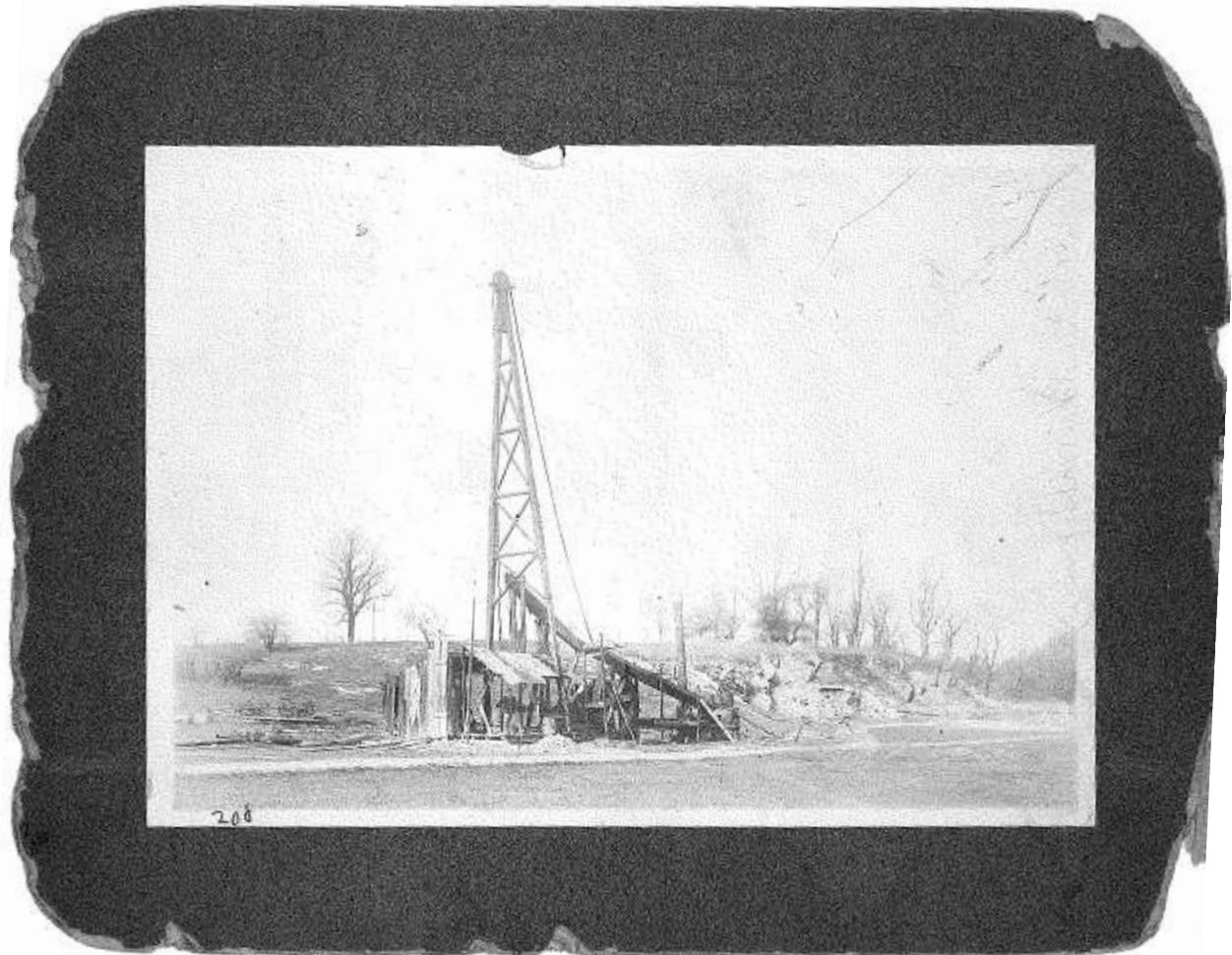
- Members of **Boy Scout Troop 83**, Lionville, who went to Camp Horseshoe, included Albert Miller, Steven Pope, Terry Skeen, Glen Lumis, John Cunningham, Schuyler Rennard, Frank Pechin, Roger Northrup and Joseph McClure.

- “**The Silver Stars**” dance band was comprised of local fellows, who appeared on Paul Whiteman’s “On the Boardwalk” TV show. They were Joe Ursini and John Dawson, trumpet; Tom Sheehan, drums; Skip Amway, Earl Thomas and Herb Jameson, sax; Jackie Miller, bass; Wayne Smith, trombone; and Joe Whiteman, piano.

- Glenmoore **Girl Scouts** who attended day camp were Linda Hogan, Patty Houck, Marlene and Mary Ann Harple, Betty MacDougal, Bonnie Moore, Joan Morrison and Catherine Bingaman.

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.

They were drilling for oil in Lyndell



No one identified one of the rigs which were drilling for oil in Lyndell in 1919. Oil reportedly had been discovered in **Lyndell** by John Lewis, proprietor of the general store there. Skeptics in the neighborhood pointed out that there was an oil tank, with a capacity of about 100 gallons, in the cellar of Lewis's store, which was about 25 feet behind where the oil had been discovered. Lewis insisted that the tank wasn't leaking. Despite those suspicions, nearby property owners were leasing their land, and many drilling rigs were brought into the area. Those who took a sample of the discovered oil said it had a "distinct kerosene odor" and "burns about as readily as artificially refined kerosene." Also, an "analysis discloses the presence of some lubrication oils, as well as kerosene." Carol Sinex Schmidt, whose father, Frank Sinex, operated the Lyndell Country Store for many years, provided the photo of the oil drilling rig. Despite those suspicions, many people bought stock in the Farmers Oil Company, which was underwriting the drilling operation in Lyndell. The stock certificate shown below was provided by Matt McCausland.



Our Wish List

Here's our Wish List, which notes stuff the Historical Society especially needs to reach our goals. Obviously, we'd also love to have ANY artifact or printed material, which has a Downingtown connection, as well. We're starting our pursuit with a request for these items:

- DHS yearbooks published since 1964.
- A digital SLR camera (one that's more than a basic point-and-shooter) which we'll use to photograph donated artifacts in our archival collection. That means we'll need one that's capable of taking pictures, which include tiny details.

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

Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org. And if you wish to bring ANY item that has a Downingtown connection to Ashbridge House, our 306-year-old headquarters on Route 30, next to the Chick-Fil-A restaurant, we're open 1-4 PM every Sunday afternoon.

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.

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

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: Vdilugi@downingtowntown.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.downingtowntown.org to register.

Chicken BBQ Dinner

Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 West Strasburg Road, will host a Chicken BBQ Dinner on Saturday, July 25. The menu includes BBQ chicken (leg/thigh), cole slaw, corn on the cob, baked beans, roll & butter, dessert, and beverage. Hours for the "Eat-in" or "Take-out" option are from 4:30 to 6:30 PM. Cost is \$10/adult and \$5/child (5 to 12 years of age). Contact the church office at (610) 696-5247 or office@marshalltonchurch.org with any questions.

Summer Jam

The second of a series of three Summer Jams will be held from 5-9 PM on Friday, July 31 in the Mill Alley Pocket Park, along East Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown. The event, sponsored by Kimberton Whole Foods, Synergema and the School of Rock, will include food, crafts and music. For more info, see: www.downingtowntownmainstreet.com/calendar.

Links for the Library

A golf outing, sponsored by Roberts Subaru in Downingtown, will benefit the Downingtown Library. The outing will take place on Monday, July 27 at Applecross Country Club in East Brandywine. Package includes lunch, golf, on-course refreshments, reception, & barbeque dinner. Prizes will be awarded to top teams, longest drive, and closest to the pin. Roberts Subaru will also host a hole-in-one contest in which the winner will win a new Subaru.

To purchase tickets via PayPal, click the link below. Payment can also be made by check and mailed to: Francine Dague 122 Wallace Ave. Downingtown, PA 19335. For more info, see: www.downingtownlibrary.org/.

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.