



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

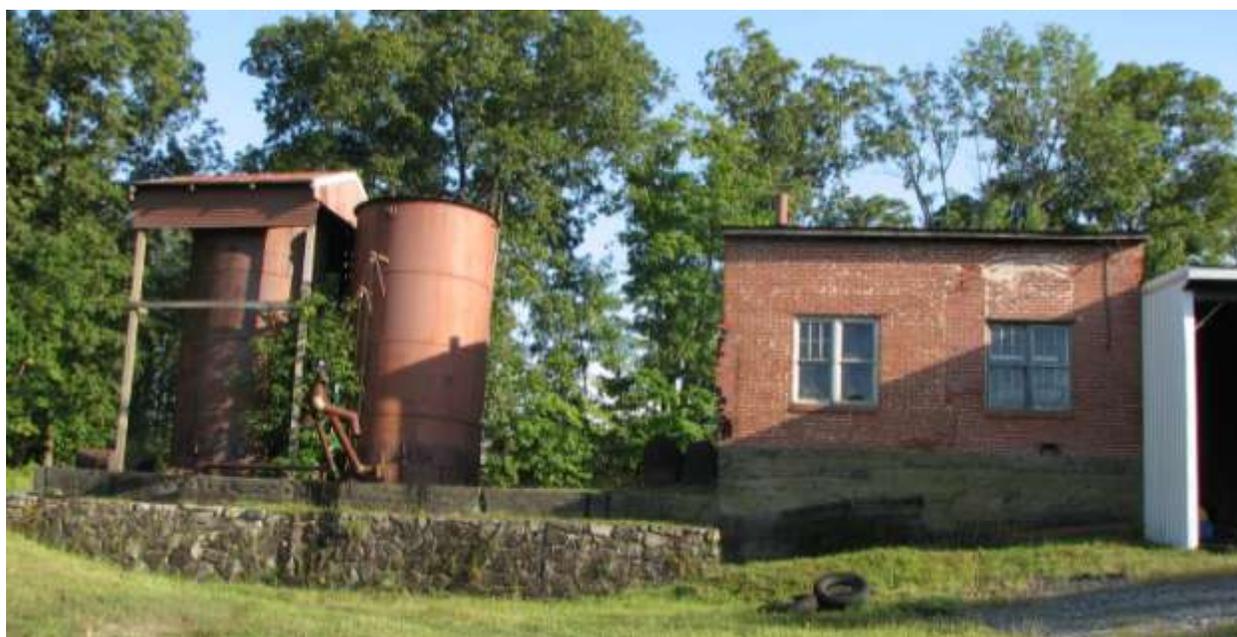
www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

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 site in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your response to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org.

News in winter of 1919-1920 included discovery of bodies of two dead babies at Bicking paper mill

Noted below are news items originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* during the winter months of 1919-1920.

- The bodies of two dead babies were discovered in the same week, among the loads of scrap paper and paperboard delivered to the **Bicking Paper Mill No. 2** in the borough. The bodies of the infants—a boy and a girl—were mixed in with the recycled paper stock that was used in the production of paperboard at the plant. Deputy coroner Wilmer Johnson turned the bodies over to a local undertaker.

- Officials of the recently formed Downingtown **American Legion Post** were making plans for a post home in the borough. Members of a fundraising committee, appointed to oversee the solicitation of money for the Post home project, included Fred Howe, Wallace Pearson, Edward Powell and Harry Raudenbush.

- The **Frank Miller Paper Co.** distributed a total of \$15,000 in bonus pay to 175 employees. The highest amount given to one worker was \$157. The firm also established a life insurance program for employees, without a physical exam. The coverage ranged from \$500 for those who were employed 6-18 months to \$2,000 for those who worked at the mill for at least five years.

- After approving the purchase of six rubber coats and an additional pool table, members of the **Minquas Fire Co.** elected these leaders: Martin Binder, chief; engineers Frank Weiler, Dan Zittle, Albert Moore, Donald Page and William Moore; hosemen Frank Donnelly, Charles Bloom, Edgar Griffith, Earl Entekin, Russell Davis, Charles Gantt, Jesse Good, Copeland Nichols, Howard Logan and Parke Alexander; fire police officers George Taylor, John Nichols, Ralph Williams, Norman Rogers, Norman Chrisman and Joseph Smith.

- Downingtown taxidermist **Robert Riday's** ad in the *Archive* suggested that hunters should have those "nice birds and other game pieces" mounted and then give them as Christmas gifts.

Interesting news from 68 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local papers in the latter part of November 1947.

- The Downingtown **American Legion Post** announced plans to buy a plot of land, which included a 150-foot frontage on Pennsylvania Avenue, across from the baseball diamond in Kerr Park. The land was owned by Chandler Roberts. Legion officials said they could afford the property because \$4,015 had been added to the Post's treasury, after splitting the proceeds from a recent fair, co-sponsored with the local VFW Post. Officers of the Post were Harlan Clavier, commander; Harry Elston, first vice commander; Lambert McGuckin, second vice commander; Joseph Miller, financial officer; Rev. David Stewart, chaplain; and Norman Holcombe, adjutant.

- The **Women's Auxiliary of St. Anthony's Lodge** and the **Downingtown Woman's Club** each donated \$25 to Mrs. Frank Lenhardt, president of the **DHS Band Mothers Club**. Contributions to the fund were used to buy new uniforms for the DHS marching band.

- Although the Whippets scored first, on a 60-yard scamper by Dan Barrow, the **DHS football team** lost to Pottstown 12-6 on Thanksgiving morning. It was the Trojans' fifth win in the 13-game series with Downingtown.

- Film star Claude Rains, who lived in West Bradford at the time, was one of the VIPs who attended a performance of a play written and directed by Charles Ax, DHS English teacher. The cast of the comedy—presented by the **Downingtown Young Men's Association** and performed in the auditorium of the Junior-Senior High—included: Marguerite Murray, Gertrude Hickey, Mylin Plank, Hathaway Frain, Richard Warren, James Mahan, Robert Romig, Robert Mitman, Alex Bareford, William Ash, Vinton Smedley, Mrs. John Fisher, Peter Short and George Ciarlone.

- Patty Bittle, Evelyn Bunting and Mary Brackbill were invested into **Girl Scout Troop 10** in Marshallton. And girls who completed their intermediate training so they could join Troop 55 were Peggy and Frances DiMatteo, Martha Newman, Jeanie Thompson and Verna Woodward.

Thanks for the computer, Dr. King



Dr. William King, secretary of the DHS Class of 1946, recently donated a Dell desktop computer to the Historical Society. We had casually mentioned to him that we were having problems with a computer, which had been used for several years by Immaculata University's library staff before we got it about five years ago. That old computer recently started having mini-crashes because it was overwhelmed by the thousands of data sets we were entering into our ever-growing Family Files in our Archives.

Well, we were shocked about two weeks ago when we received an email from Dr. King, which advised us that a Dell desktop computer had been ordered for us. The new unit is up and running at Ashbridge House, our 306-year-old headquarters.

Since most of you are too young to remember what Bill King looked like when he stocked shelves at Mittel's store on West Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown and made deliveries to

customers after school and on weekends while leading a busy life (mixed chorus, football, track, and French Club) at DHS, we retrieved this yearbook photo. He practiced dentistry for many years before retiring in Mountain Home, AR.

What area residents talked about in early June 1979

Noted below are snippets of news, which were retrieved from the *East Branch Citizen* in the first two weeks of June 1979.

- Plans for the revitalized **Good Neighbor Day** celebration on the Fourth of July in Downingtown were unveiled. The day's events began at 10 AM, when the Run For Life road race got underway at Kerr Park. Bud Bruton, chairman of the celebration, said participants had the option of running three, six or nine miles, over a three-mile course, laid out on borough streets. Proceeds from the race were donated to the Minquas, East Brandywine and Uwchlan ambulance or rescue squads. Following the race, there were games and bike races for kids in the park, under the supervision of Gail McCahon. And a canoe race down the Brandywine, sponsored by the Downingtown Rotary Club, was held at 1 PM. The day-long celebration ended with a fireworks display at the DHS football stadium.

- **Uwchlan Township** supervisors decided to accept bids on an 8.7-acre tract at the intersection of Devon Drive and Whitford Road. They suspected that the land might be purchased by the Exton-Lionville YMCA. The land had been bought by the township for \$65,000 in 1973, with expectations of building a \$750,000 municipal headquarters there. However, the township found a more attractive, less expensive option for its municipal building on North Ship Road, the 11-acre Baird property.

- Downingtown Borough Council expressed reservations about the **mobile hot dog cart**, operated by Larry Priori on Lancaster Avenue. However, Borough Manager Don Greenleaf said the cart had met the same inspection criteria as restaurants or delicatessens in the borough did. Vince DiEuliis, president of Council, also said he didn't want to have problems with street vendors lining Lancaster Avenue and blocking store entrances, as was the case in Philadelphia. Eileen Schafer, who had written and taught the Food Manager's Certification course offered by the

Chester County Intermediate Unit, claimed that Priori had taken her course even though it was not required by the borough, which was exempt from the County's food handling rules. She also noted that, "I would have no qualms about purchasing food from either the food cart or Larry's Steak Shop because of the high standards of sanitation the owner demands."

- Most of the SRO crowd at a public hearing, especially those who owned property in Marshallton, let **West Bradford** officials know that they lacked enthusiasm for a proposal to establish a historic district in the township. David Davis, chairman of the historic committee, assured the crowd that the proposed ordinance wouldn't force property owners or affect routine maintenance to improve their homes. "It doesn't regulate the choice of paint, windows, doors, siding, roofing material, etc. It only regulates the sort of construction for which you need a building permit. Nor does new construction have to be a Colonial reproduction, added Davis.

- The new Town Watch operation in **West Pikeland** was working smoothly, according to William Jefferies, chief of the township's police force. The volunteers gave the township about 140 hours of additional protection each month, reported Jefferies.

- Behind the superb pitching of Lauri Carcella, the **DHS softball team** beat Boyertown 11-4 to gain second place in the Ches-Mont League. The Downingtown attack was led by Diane Stoner's three hits and four RBIs. And Carcella starred again when she threw hitless ball through the first six innings, as the Whippets beat Ridley Park 7-3 in the opening round of District I competition. Diane Repp bolstered Downingtown's offense with a three-run homer. The DHS girls were eliminated from the playoffs, when they lost to North Penn, 6-5. Whippets who were named to the All-Ches-Mont squad were Wendy McClure, Judy O'Connell, Janice Longacre, Debbie Hannum, Sherri Clayton and Carcella.

- Members of **Cub Pack 8**, sponsored by Hopewell Methodist Church, who earned badges, included Ralph Hlavek, Mickey Rusden, Charles Broschious, Jamie Bruton, Adam Ray, Scott Kirkpatrick and David Matthews.

- Recent **property transfers** included: 8 Arianna Dr., Uwchlan, \$101,410; 404 Jefferson Ave., Downingtown, \$43,900; 933 Sugars Bridge Rd., West Bradford, \$31,500; 308 Balderston Rd., West Whiteland, \$94,530; 1 Sussex Pl., East Brandywine, \$82,210.

- Speakers at the **DHS commencement** were Damian DiEuliis, Anne Kennedy, John Dagher and Anne Dowlin. Class president Gregory Schneck welcomed the 517 graduates. Other class officers were Donna Frame, vice president; Michael Anthony, secretary; and Christopher Lichok, treasurer.

Brief, but important

- An article in a January 1941 edition of the *Downingtown Archive* noted that G.O. Carlson of Thorndale bought a 25-acre tract from W. I. Pollock for \$25,000 on the west side of Manor Avenue in the borough. Initially, the plan was to build single homes there. Instead, Carlson donated the land to the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, and most of the property is now occupied by St. Joseph's Catholic Church and School, plus the parish's convent and rectory and the Downingtown Little League's baseball diamonds.

- The *Daily Local News* published a neat story about Jim Duca being honored for his 17 years' service as a crossing guard at East Ward School. If you missed it, you can read it via: www.dailylocal.com/general-news/20150608/downingtown-school-community-honors-crossing-guard.

- We also read that Camp Tweedale in the Oxford area has closed and is up for sale. We suspect that many women, who attended the Girl Scout camp as youngsters, have some interesting recollections about the camp. Please send them to: Info@downingtowntownareahistoricalsociety.org.

It's at 420-422 E. Lancaster Ave. in the borough



Paul Houle is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above as the Hunt Downing house at 420-422 East Lancaster Ave., which is part of the East Lancaster Avenue Historic District in Downingtown. It was built in 1802 by Hunt Downing, proprietor of the Gen. Washington Inn (now the Pook and Pook auction house) and part-owner of a stage coach line. He also was a quartermaster during the Whiskey Rebellion, helped create a military food commissary at the Inn during the American Revolution, and opened Chester County's first post office (the only one between Lancaster and Philadelphia) in 1796 in one of the Inn's rooms. There were many changes later in the 19th Century, when the building was converted into two residences. And after a Philadelphia architect supervised the removal of 40 paper-thin, smoky-colored glass panes from the house, they were placed in the Betsy Ross House in Philadelphia.

High school volunteers wanted

The Historical Society is seeking local high school students who need to complete their community service project in order to graduate. Volunteers would come to Ashbridge House, our headquarters--next to the Chick-Fil-A restaurant in the Ashbridge Square Shopping Center on Route 30--on Sunday afternoons (1-4 PM) to help with filing and other office tasks. If you're interested, please respond via: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org.

Our Wish List

Here's our Wish List, which notes some things 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 between 1965 and 1970.
- A **flatbed scanner** that's capable of digitizing and depixelating slides, postcards and printed photos.

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

Info@downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.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.

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.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.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.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

Centennial celebration

The Glen Moore Fire Co. will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Saturday, June 13. The celebration will start with a parade at 11 AM, followed by a housing and community party at the fire house at 1 PM. For more details, see: www.glenmoorefire.org/content/100th/.

St. Joe's Community Festival

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Manor Avenue, Downingtown, will have its annual Community Festival from 6-10 PM on Tuesday, June 16 to Thursday, June 18 and from 6 -11 PM on Friday, June 19 and Saturday, June 20. Every Night

is Family Night; ride all night for \$25. Live bands each night in the beer garden. Food booth located in front of the school building. Fireworks Friday night, June 19; rain date: Saturday, June 20.

Garden Tour

The Friends of the Downingtown Library will host their Images of Spring Garden Tour from noon to 4 PM on Sunday, June 14. The tour will include a variety of 10 picturesque gardens in the Downingtown area. Tickets are on sale now at the library, at 122 Wallace Ave., Downingtown, for \$20, or for \$23 on the day of the tour. The tour is open to adults and children ages 10 and over. For more information, see: www.downingtownlibrary.org, or contact Carolyn Marchesani at: friendscm2015@gmail.com.

Hope for Helm golf tournament

A two-man scramble golf tournament will be held on Saturday June 13 at the Honeybrook Golf Club. Proceeds from the tournament will help Matt Helm and his family, as he recovers from a kayaking accident, which left him paralyzed from the waist down. For more details on the tournament, check out: www.hopeforhelm.com/#!/golftournament/c22d4

Program on companion dogs

West Caln Historical Society's program 7 PM Tuesday, June 16 will feature Richard Pomerantz's talk about a cancer companion canine. It will be held at the West Caln Municipal Building., 721 W. Kings Highway in Wagontown. The programs are free and open to the public.

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.