



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. 25

June 18, 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 which were originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* in the latter part of June in 1979.

- The **East Brandywine Fire Co.** announced it would activate its new medical assistance unit on July 1. The unit would include certified emergency technicians and first aid personnel who would help stabilize patients until an ambulance arrived.
- Kelly Walker and Matt Wagner were named the outstanding fifth graders at **Pickering Valley School**. They received plaques from Mrs. Howard Buzzard, president of the Home and School Association.
- The Linen Mart store at the **Downingtown Farmers' Market** on Route 30 in East Caln were selling king-size waterbeds for \$289.
- Newly installed officers of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** included: Marcia McQueen, president; Kathy Deisinger, first vice president; JoAnn Ogborn, second vice president; Anne Taylor, recording secretary; and Betty Jefferis, treasurer.
- **DHS lacrosse players** Jeanne Minahan, Joy Branyan and Jenny Ward were named to the All-Ches-Mont League's first team.
- Recent **property transfers** included: 12 King St., Downingtown, \$22,500; 102 Gloucester Court, East Brandywine, \$54,951; 107 Aberdare Lane, Uwchlan, \$50,990; 1678 Susanne Way, West Bradford, \$84,250; 135 Denbigh Terrace, West Whiteland, \$47,600; 3202 Ray Road, Caln, \$60,550; 105 McIlvain Drive, East Caln, \$79,000.
- Volunteers who were working on a **Downingtown Historic Site Survey** and travelled to the National Archives in Washington, DC, to do research on East Caln's Census, included Peg Perpstra, Chris Ehlers, Ellen Hughes, Ellen Lennon, Pam Wilson, Charles Kupferschmidt, Frances Ash, Sheila Knotwell and Jane Davidson, borough historian. Also, the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission agreed to microfilm Downingtown borough records from the 1859-1945 period.
- Confirmed at **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville, were Erica Abrams, David Carl Bittner, Wendy Ann Chikla, Deborah Ruth Edwin, Alexander Colin Gilfillan, Richard William Meier, Amy Lynn Parkhurst, Curtis Richard Stoudt, Ridgely Paul Werkheiser and Jeffrey Frank Zona.
- Members of the **Downingtown Little League** 10-year-old all-star team were Tony Farnum, Matt Wagner, Pete Karahalys, Brad Titus, Kris Goddard, David Lucerne, Bill Straub, Kevin McCool, Pete Moran, Scotty Davidson, Mike Gonda, Steve Doan, Bob Cumens and Joe McCahon.

Having problems opening your Hist-O-Gram?

If you've had problems opening your Hist-O-Grams recently, perhaps it's because you need to install the newest version of Adobe Reader. Val DiLuigi, the Historical Society's webmaster, suggests that you install: <https://get.adobe.com/reader/otherversions/>. And you can always access the latest Hist-O-Gram via: www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org. Also, you can access past editions of the weekly Hist-O-Grams by clicking on www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

Local news items originally published 95 years ago

Here are several news items, which were originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* in the spring of 1920.

- The **International Specialty Manufacturing Co.** was a new business in Downingtown. The firm's 12 machines and 20 employees were going to produce 1,200 "Never-Slip" neckties daily. The company had a plant in Canada. The operation was located in a building, which originally was constructed by Theodore Griffith & Son for the Bell Telephone Co., at the corner of Green Street and Washington Avenue in the borough. The company's general manager was Robert Bone of Downingtown.

- **Casper Terwilliger** claimed that the new Visible gasoline pump, recently installed at the Brandywine Garage at Lancaster and Manor Avenues in Downingtown, made it "absolutely impossible to fool the buying public, as the buyer can see his gasoline measured out before it goes into his car."

- **William Stauffer**, who operated a store in Downingtown for 47 years, sold his store and its contents to its next-door neighbor, Griffith's Hardware, on East Lancaster Avenue in the borough. An archway was built between the two neighboring stores, creating a much larger hardware store.

- Local builder Harry Deets erected a plant on Brandywine Avenue, near the Reading Railroad station, in the borough for the **Downingtown Ice Manufacturing Co.** The firm expected to begin producing ice for local dealers early in the summer of 1920.

- A continued growing student enrollment forced the **Downingtown School Board** to increase the school tax by one mill in order to pay for the lease of a portable building, which could accommodate two additional classrooms, plus two more teachers. However, the school directors insisted that building a new school was "out of the question."

Interesting news in early December 1947

Here are some of the news items Downingtown area residents were reading 68 years ago.

- **Madame Laney**, a "gifted palmist and psychic medium," was offering "true advice on all affairs of life" in Thorndale. Better yet, her newspaper ad noted that the Short Line bus stopped at her front door, which was located at the corner of Fisherville Road and Route 30.

- Over 350 local people had their Thanksgiving dinner at the Odd Fellows Hall in Lionville. The dinner committee, comprised of members of the **Odd Fellows**, as well as **St. Paul's Lutheran Church** in Lionville, included Harry Quay, Isabel Acker, Mrs. Samuel Supplee, Everett Wilson, Mrs. Edwin Smedley, Mrs. Harvey Happersett and Russell Allison. Also in Lionville, the first rural Junior Woman's Club in Chester County was founded via the sponsorship of the **Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan**.

- Lineman Gerald Lyons and running back Daniel Barrow received trophies for their outstanding play, based on the voting by opposing coaches, at the **DHS football** banquet.

- Newly-elected officers of the Women's Society of Christian Service of **Glen Moore Methodist Church** were: Mrs. P.W. Bare, president; Mrs. J.B. Matlack, vice president; Mrs. Grier Miller, treasurer; and Mrs. Darwin Garrett, secretary.

- Diners at the **Exton Lodge** could eat a multi-course, tenderloin steak dinner on a Sunday for just \$2.75.

Brief, but important

- An article in the February 20, 1941 edition of the *Downingtown Archive* noted that members of the **Alert Fire Co.** were particularly excited about the new fire station on West Pennsylvania Avenue in the borough which was to be dedicated on the weekend of June 20-21, 1941. In addition to protecting public property, some Alerts said at the time, that the new fire house would be a social center, with its banquet facility on the second floor. Better yet, they added, a planned roller skating rink and bowling alleys would make it a sports center, as well.
- Regarding the information about the **bodies of two dead babies** being found in a pile of recycled paper delivered to the Bicking Mill in Downingtown in one week in February 1920, Dan Lindley, an expert on Chester County cemeteries, provided us with information on two other tragic instances of where a body of an abandoned dead baby had been found in the Downingtown area in the early 20th Century. One baby's body was found in the recycled paper stock at the Shryock paper mill on Dorlan's Mill Road in Uwchlan Township in May 1916, and another was found in a "quarry hole" in East Caln in May 1906. Both were buried in Northwood Cemetery.
- Speaking of illusions, we botched up part of the June 11 Hist-O-Gram, when we listed the speakers for the **1979 DHS commencement**. Jeanne McClure Pennell, who now lives in Massachusetts, sent an email which diplomatically informed us that the speakers we cited were her classmates and they all had graduated from DHS in 1978, not in 1979. Although we shaved a year off those 1978 grads' actual ages, we owe them a flimsy explanation, as well. Let's just say a bunch of copies of the *East Branch Citizen*--supposedly organized by date, including a special DHS graduation supplement for 1978--had been misplaced in the stack of back issues from 1979. Gee, couldn't Desmond have checked the date, or come up with a better excuse than that?

Donor has ordered a flatbed scanner for us

An anonymous donor has ordered a flatbed scanner for the Historical Society. That wonderful gift will enable us to digitize and depixelate slides, postcards and printed photos in our archival collection.

Obviously, our Wish List, which notes some things the Historical Society especially needs to reach our goals, is working. However, we're still looking for DHS **yearbooks** published between 1965 and 1970.

If you need more info about any of our requests, please send an email to:

Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org. And if you wish to donate ANY item that has a Downingtown connection to the Historical Society, please bring it 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.

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@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

It's located in the Byers Station section of Upper Uwchlan Township



Russ Faller is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the building in the photo above as the former U.S. Graphite Company's processing plant in the Byers Station Historic District in Upper Uwchlan Township. The plant is located at the juncture of Byers and Eagle Farms Roads. Notable buildings in the Historic District include a variety of residences, a factory, a Masonic lodge (1894), and the former Byers Hotel (ca. 1874). The community grew around the Byers Station railroad station, after its opening in 1871, and continued after graphite was discovered in the area in 1875.

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 Downingtowntareahistorical 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

Clean-Up Day

The Downingtown Parks and Recreation Commission is sponsoring a Clean-up Day at Kerr Park from 9-11 AM on Saturday, June 27. Rain date will be 10 AM-Noon Sunday, June 28. For more info, send email via

downingtowntparksandrec@gmail.com

Summer Jam

The first of a series of three Summer Jams will be held from 5-9 PM on Friday, June 26 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.downingtowntmainstreet.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.downingtowntlibrary.org/.

St. Joe's Community Festival

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Manor Avenue, Downingtown, will have its annual Community Festival from 6-10 PM on 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.

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.