



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.

Philly newspaper article said borough had speed traps

Noted below are news items that were originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* in the autumn months of 1919.

- The *Archive* reported that an article in the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* claimed the borough had instituted at least one “trap” in order to **end speeding** on Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown. The article said the Automobile Club of Philadelphia had warned motorists that those caught exceeding the borough’s 15-mile-per-hour speed limit could be fined as much as \$10, plus \$4.55 in court costs. When the Downingtown’s Burgess (mayor) Vinton Phillips and Police Chief Tommy Gray were shown the article, they noted that borough police officers didn’t make arrests for speeding, unless a car was going more than 24 miles an hour.

- \$333.80 in proceeds from the Firemen’s Festival in Guthriesville were given to Downingtown’s **Alert Fire Co.** The donation was “a recognition of past favors and as a gentle reminder that future assistance in case of fire will be very cordially appreciated,” according to residents of the village in East Brandywine. The Alerts demonstrated how their new Seagrave fire engine was operated at the festival.

- Incorporators of the new **Farmers’ Bank of Uwchland** were: C.D. Smedley, Stephen Moore, Frank March, Walter Dowlin, and Clarence Dorsey. They were elected by 76 stockholders from Uwchland, Byers, Lionville and Font.

- The first anniversary of the signing of the **Armistice**, which officially ended World War I on Nov. 11, 1918, was observed with a special program at the Downingtown Opera House on Brandywine Avenue. The program, which was conducted by the Patriotic Order of Sons of America (POSA), included a historic pageant put on by Downingtown school students who performed in front of a standing-room-only audience.

- Rules for the **new playgrounds** at East Ward and West Ward Schools in the borough included: the playground and equipment couldn’t be used on Sundays. And on Saturdays and holidays, the playground at East Ward was open only to girls, while the one at West Ward was limited to boys.

- Burgess Vinton Philips asked borough residents not to walk on the borough streets after midnight. His **request for cooperation**—not a formal curfew—was made in order to aid “our police department in their efforts to capture the robbers who have been operating in our town for some time past. There has been several plans to catch them, not only by our own police, but with the assistance of outside men, and they have been handicapped several times by many citizens acting as self-appointed police hunting around the back alleys and other places for robbers, and also shooting at anyone they saw either in back alleys or yards.”

- The recently established DHS Athletic Committee—comprised of Herbert Ash, Howard Baldwin and Hathaway Frain—hired Al Schneider, who had played for Carnegie Tech and Villanova, as the coach of the **DHS football team**. However, Schneider’s collegiate experience didn’t translate into many wins on the playing field. Worse yet, the team’s manager failed to have someone at the gate to collect admission fees when Downingtown faced Coatesville in a big home game played on the infield of the racetrack (at the intersection of Brandywine Avenue and Boot Road).

- Enrollment in the **Downingtown school system’s** elementary grades had grown to the point that the number of students in a classroom ranged from 45 to 57.

Why are these women smiling?



The smiling women in the photo (taken by Mike Dunn) above are: front row, Linda Lefko, left, and Marie Hill. Those in the back row are, left to right: Carol Grigson, Terry Gaul and Donna Capriotti. No, they didn't win a lottery. You'll find why they're smiling in next week's Hist-O-Gram.

What local people were talking about 36 years ago

Noted below are news items, which were originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* in late May 1979.

- Plans were underway to re-locate the **state store** to the much-maligned Downing Center on East Pennsylvania Avenue in Downingtown. The state Liquor Control Board envisioned that liquor and wine sales, which totaled about \$800,000 in 1974 while the state store was located at 130 E. Lancaster Ave., would exceed one million dollars at the new, self-service location.

- Recent **property transfers** included: 509 N. Bailey Road, Caln, \$56,000; 82 Winding Way, East Caln, \$106,000; 1375 Glenside Ave., West Bradford, \$78,500; 348 Washington Ave., Downingtown, \$76,000; 218 Autumn Drive, Uwchlan, \$119,417; 50 Blakely Road, East Brandywine, \$91,340; 304 South Balderston Drive, West Whiteland, \$78,977.

- Ralph Bagnato, Jamie Bruton, David Matthews and Todd McQueen received their Webelos badge at a meeting of **Cub Pack 8**, sponsored by Hopewell Methodist Church.

- Among the winners of art awards at the DHS **Living Arts Weekend** competition were the one-artist shows of Linda Smith, paintings, and Joe DeMucci, ceramics.

- The SICO Foundation of Mount Joy, PA, awarded \$3,000, **four-year scholarships** to these DHS seniors: Annette DeRenzi, Mike Gable and Laurie Geschwindt.
- Officers of the **Industrial Arts Club** at DHS were Joseph Sciandra, president; Glenvar Harman, vice president; Denise Greenhalgh, recorder; Stephanie Bateman, secretary; Kenneth Klunk, treasurer; and Charles Hallem, sergeant-at-arms.
- The DHS **boys' track team** won the Ches-Mont League championship meet for the first time. First place winners for the Whippets were Drew Proctor, triple jump; Rick Stonewall, 100-yard dash; plus the 440-yard relay team comprised of Stonewall, Dave White, Ted Robinson and Reese Hunt. And although DHS girls' track coach Edie Hille was disappointed in how her team performed at Districts, Missy Murdock set a new school record in the triple jump, and Renee Gallman established a new mark in the 220-yard dash.

Local news in the spring of 1954

The following news was retrieved from issues of the *Downingtown Archive* published 61 years ago:

- Newly elected officers of the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** were Ray Sheeler, president; Newlin Moore, first vice president; and Vinton Smedley, treasurer.
- Officers of the **Downingtown Paper Co. Athletic Association** were Charles Sigle, president; James Summers, vice president; Earl Crisman, secretary; and George Meacham, treasurer.
- New officers of the **Glenmoore Improvement Society** included Roland Evans, president; Mrs. William Funk, vice president; Mrs. Richard Cadbury, secretary; and Herbert Pritchard, treasurer.
- Patience Kinloch and Herbert Lee were named the outstanding athletes at the DHS sports banquet.
- Officers elected to lead the **Downingtown Young Men's Association** were Allan Hughes, president; Joseph Travaglini, vice president; Morris Stevens, treasurer; and Bob Williams, secretary. The DYMA was considering buying the former Roosevelt Theatre on Brandywine Avenue and turning it into a youth center.
- New officers of the **St. Anthony's Lodge Auxiliary** were Jerry Marino, president; Theresa Smedley, vice president; Louise Bartelmo, secretary; and Adeline Capriotti, treasurer.
- Judy Hogan was crowned May Queen at the **Wallace Township School's May Day**. Her court included Jeanette Pritchard, Lillian Miller, Shirley Moore, Christa Edelen, and Debbie and Christine Harrison. Also, Fay Bousum was the empress at the **DHS May Day Festival**.
- New officers of the **DHS Parents Club** were Mrs. Raymond Schollenberger, president; Mrs. Clifford Orr, vice president; Mrs. Thomas Lee, secretary; and Mrs. Robert Piersol, treasurer.

It's located on Devereux Road in Glenmoore



Jan Lewis Bednarchik, who used to be the secretary of Wallace Township, is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify location of the site in the above photo as the farmhouse on Devereux Road in Glenmoore. In 2008, it was part of the 606-acre Valhalla Brandywine resort, proposed by Albert Greenfield III.

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:

1. DHS yearbooks published between 1965 and 1970.
2. A digital camera (one that's more than a basic point-and-clicker) which we'll use to photograph donated artifacts. 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@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

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.

Fine Arts Festival

The Downingtown Fine Arts Festival will be held in the 100 block of East Lancaster Avenue on from 10 AM to 6 PM on Saturday, May 30 and from 10 AM to 5 PM on Sunday May 31. The two-day festival will be put on by the David Oleski Events and the Downingtown Main Street Assn., in partnership with the Victory Brewing Co. and the Borough of Downingtown. See www.downingtownfinearts.com/ for more details.

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 dog

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.

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 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: JPC Cheryl@verizon.net.