



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.

What local people talked about in early September 1963

Noted below are items retrieved from local newspapers published 52 years ago.

- Though sharply critical of the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision that **banned Bible-reading in public schools**, the Joint High School Board decided to give a one-month trial to limiting students' daily opening exercises to activities such as reading poetry and famous peoples' quotation, and playing "good" music. Also, the Board was informed by the State Department of Public Instruction that Downingtown's plans for a planetarium-classroom could

not be eliminated from the school district's plan for an addition to the high school. The director of the State's Bureau of School Building Construction and Transportation claimed the planetarium-classroom provided a more adequate science program, and that the equipment could be bought for about \$11,000, part of which could be paid for with federal funds.

- In a preview of the **DHS football team's** prospects for the 1963 season, Coach Ray DiSerafino said, "Speed has always been Downingtown's biggest asset, and this year is going to be no different." DiSerafino, who was looking forward to his seventh season as head coach, admitted that, "our team is going to be small, averaging about 155 pounds, but that doesn't worry me. I would sacrifice weight for speed anytime." The team had a 5-4 record in 1962.
- Officers of the **Downingtown Elementary Home and School Association** were Charles Menas, president; Mrs. James McQuail, first vice president; Mrs. William Hildebeitel, second vice president; Mrs. Haviland Mecray, recording secretary; Mrs. Robert Taylor, corresponding secretary; and Kenneth McCardell, treasurer.
- Members of the **Village League of the Uwchlans**, who were models in the organization's annual fashion show, included Mrs. Donald Farrell, Mrs. Lacey Lackey, Mrs. Richard Mahan, Mrs. William Meredith, Mrs. Garfield Smith and Mrs. William Wagoner. Mrs. Lyle Shoemaker and Edith Oberholser were guest models from the Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan. Mrs. Paul Otter was director of the show.

Please help the Historical Society by supporting our annual Restaurant Raffle

The Historical Society's third annual "A Taste of Chester County" restaurant raffle is bigger and better than ever, because those who buy a ticket will have an opportunity to win \$1,400 worth of dinners at seven great, local restaurants.

Proceeds from the raffle will enable the Historical Society to continue its efforts to repair the stone walls of Ashbridge House, our 306-year-old headquarters on Route 30 in the Ashbridge Square Shopping Center in East Caln Township. That means your continued support will enable us to continue re-pointing the house's leaking, exterior walls.

Those who generously supported last year's raffle allowed us to replace the crumbling mortar that bonded the stonework on the east side walls of the house, plus the exterior of the summer kitchen, which was built in the mid-19th Century.

The raffle winner will receive seven \$200 vouchers, with a total value of \$1,400, for meals at these seven area restaurants: Amani's BYOB, St. Anthony's Restaurant, The General Warren Inn, The Kimberton Inn, The Orangery, The Bordley House Grille and The Downingtown Country Club. Vouchers are good for one seating at each restaurant. Exclusions may apply.

Raffle tickets are \$50 each. They can be purchased at Ashbridge House, which is next to the Chick-Fil-A Restaurant, from 1-4 PM on Sundays. You also can order them by calling the Historical Society, 610-269-1709; Francine Dague, 610-306-2904; or by sending an email to: Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org. The winning ticket will be drawn at 3 PM on Sunday, November 15. You don't have to be at the drawing to win. For more info on the raffle, including a disclaimer, go to: www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Please help us preserve Ashbridge House, a local historic treasure.

Paranormal investigators to reveal what they recently found



The Chester County Paranormal Investigators will make presentations on their latest findings, after recently spending several nights at Ashbridge House, our 306-year-old headquarters. The Investigators' presentations at Ashbridge House will be at 7 PM on Saturday, October 24 and at 2 PM on Sunday, October 25. Since each seating is limited to 35 people, you are urged to buy a ticket ASAP for either of the presentations.

Tickets can be purchased in advance for \$10 by sending a check to: the Downingtown Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335, or paying for tickets on a Sunday afternoon (1-4 PM) when you visit Ashbridge House, (next to the Chick-Fil-A restaurant in the Ashbridge Square Shopping Center Square Shopping Center on Route 30 in East Caln, or by making an online payment via Paypal.

Although it is likely that both presentations will be sellouts, if any tickets are still available at the time of either presentation, they will be sold at the door at a cost of \$12. Light refreshments will be available after the presentations.

One of the interesting discoveries the Investigators revealed when they made a presentation at the Historical Society several years ago is in the photo shown above. It appears to be a picture of someone holding a cat, taken during their earlier investigation at Ashbridge House. If you want to be sure to see the Investigators' latest findings, buy your tickets now.

It was at East Lancaster Ave. and Green St. in Downingtown



Tom Lee is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site of Baird's gas station in the photo above, which was taken in about 1948. That's when Austin Windle worked there part-time, while he was attending business college. Austin recalls that gas cost about 20 cents a gallon back then. We're not sure when the gas station closed, but Nick Giunta opened his drug store on the site in 1954. It's now the site of the Lowe Rider Bikes and Board store.

More local news about life in Downingtown during World War II

Noted below are items published in local newspapers in the early part of the World War II era.

- Once each month, *The Archive* published the names of Downingtown area residents who were **authorized to buy tires** for their cars. Tires were the first item to be rationed during World War II because the Japanese had conquered the prime rubber producing nations of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies, eliminating 91% of America's rubber supply. To ensure there was enough rubber for military and vital civilian purposes, local Tire Rationing Boards issued certificates for tires or recapping upon application. Certificates for new tires were restricted to vehicles for public health and safety (medical, fire, police, garbage, and mail services), essential trucking (food, ice, fuel), and public transportation. Recapping was allowed at the discretion of the local board for any of the above, and occasionally for taxis and defense workers who shared rides. Civilians were allowed to keep five tires per automobile, and were required to surrender any others.
- Penn State was offering free **defense training courses** in the evening at DHS. The courses included courses in engineering drafting, foundations of engineering in mathematics and

physics, and foundations of engineering in engineering chemistry. The courses were part of a nationwide program conducted by the U.S. Office of Education.

- DHS students who took agriculture courses were encouraged to **work on local farms** during their summer vacations. The boys were being placed on Downingtown area farms through a program conducted by the local office of the U.S. Employment Service.

- Enrollment in the **Downingtown School District** in the 1942-43 school year totaled 1,050 students; 650 of them were in the senior-junior high school. The two-year high schools in Guthriesville and Glenmoore were being closed that school year, and students from those areas were going to start attending the junior-senior high on Manor Avenue in Downingtown.

Shanahan's band serenaded Pope on his arrival

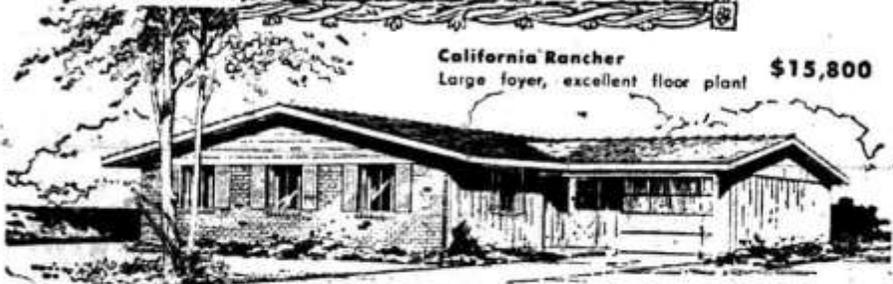


The marching band of Bishop Shanahan High School, Downingtown, serenaded Pope Francis when he arrived at Philadelphia Airport last Friday morning. And Monsignor Joseph McLoone, pastor of St. Joseph's Catholic Church, organized the distribution of Communion by 500 priests and deacons to thousands of people who attended the Papal Mass on Benjamin Franklin Parkway on Sunday.

Vintage ad of the week

The New Look
AT
S*unnybrook*

California Rancher \$15,800
Large foyer, excellent floor plan



2-Story Traditional \$16,990
1½ baths, Separate dining room



SEE THEM TODAY—SPECIAL FALL SHOWING—
at Sunnybrook of our "New Look Houses."
Order from any of our buyers approved homes
and move in before the holidays. The acceptance
has been great, check them out before
its too late.

City water and sewer with large 80x150 lots
close to schools and shopping. FHA or con
venient financing available.

Convenience: Sunnybrook is located ¼ mile North of
Rt. 30 on Rt. 113 (Uwchlan Ave.) in Suburban Downingt-
town. 5 minutes to Tempika.

Cochrane & Pasfield.
Builders of American Houses



TC&PT Sunnybrook in Suburban Downingtown
ANdrews 9-2323

The ad above for new houses in Downingtown's Sunnybrook development, between East Pennsylvania and Uwchlan Avenues, was published in local newspapers in September 1963. Gee, houses were much less expensive 52 year ago.

News items from *The Archive* in early 1922

Noted below are news items originally published in *The Downingtown Archive* in the early part of 1922.

- At the end of World War I in 1918, a citizens' committee conducted a campaign to raise funds for a large flag, to be displayed in the borough's Center Square. The response to the solicitation was so great—800 25-cent contributions—there was enough money to purchase three flags, each of which had three gold stars in memory of the three **local boys killed in the war**. They were Charles Moran, John Kemery and Joseph Hill. In addition to the flag displayed on Center Square, the other two were posted in front of the Minquas Fire Co, and at the intersection of West Lancaster and Stuart Avenues.

- Just two years after the 19th amendment—the women's right to vote—became part of the U.S. Constitution, **Martha Thomas** of Whitford announced her candidacy for the State Legislature, as the representative of Chester County's second legislative district. Miss Thomas was treasurer of the Chester County Recreation Board and a member of Chester County Hospital's Board of Managers.

- The **Downingtown Woman's Club** announced its plans to buy the Joseph Hoopes home and the surrounding 7-acre property on Manor Avenue for \$12,000. Over \$4,000 had been raised by club members and local businessmen.

- The **Downingtown Building and Loan Association** was established. The charter officers were Dr. Edgar Hutchison, president; Edgar Griffith, vice president; Howard Baldwin, secretary; and Joseph Miller, treasurer. Asa Pannebaker was the institution's solicitor.

- In Chief John Corcoran annual report on the Alert Fire Company's activities in 1921, he noted that both of the borough's fire units had responded to a blaze that caused \$1,500 worth of damage at the "**soap factory on Bradford Avenue**" in the Johnsontown section of town. Anyone know anything about that soap factory?

- Under the leadership of Coach Raymond Greenleaf, the **DHS track and field team** won the 1922 championship of Chester and Delaware Counties. The local high school had also won that championship in 1916.

- In its annual report, the **Board of Health** noted that some borough residents were using "water from springs and other sources in preference to the borough water. This to be deplored, as bad as the borough water may taste." The report also noted that the average age for the 30 people who died was 57.

- In a presentation on the history of **Uwchlan Township** at a meeting of the Uwchlan Grange, Ellis Smedley noted that, in 1778, Continental Army physicians demanded to have the key to the Uwchlan Friends meeting house in Lionville, so it could be used as a hospital for stricken soldiers. When the Friend in charge of the meeting house refused to turn over the key, the physicians gained forcible entry. Smedley also mentioned that the maternal grandmother of Teddy Roosevelt was buried in the meeting house's grave yard.

Clip Joint will be open at Ashbridge House on October 6 and 13

Our next clipping and pasting session will be held from 1-4 PM on Sunday, October 6 at Ashbridge House, our 306-year-old headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, next to the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. And we'll have our second evening Clip Joint session from 6:30-8:30 PM on Tuesday, October 13 at Ashbridge House, as well. You're all welcome to join us at either session, which involve lots of fun as well as local gossip (whoops, we meant history). And you can arrive and leave either session at your convenience.

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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

Our Wish List

The items listed below in our Wish List notes the materials with a Downingtown connection, the Historical Society especially needs to reach its archival goals.

- A copy of Barbara C. Travaglini's History of St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Downingtown.
- All DHS yearbooks published since 1964. And any yearbooks or newspapers published by Downingtown and Lionville Junior High Schools.
- Any printed materials related to: the Downingtown Young Whippets, Downingtown Little League, Downingtown Babe Ruth League or the Downingtown American Legion Baseball teams, and the Downingtown Girls' Softball League. Also, any printed materials related to the Lionville Youth Association, West Bradford Youth Association, or the East Brandywine Youth Athletics.

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

Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.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.

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

Stich-a-Thon

Sign up for a Stich-a-Thon, which will be held from 9:30 AM until 3:30 PM on Saturday, Oct. 3 at the Downingtown Library. The event will involve knitting/crocheting for the "Warm Up America" charity. Some yarn will be available at the library. Templates for the squares can be picked up at the library ahead of time if anyone wants to get an early start. It is not necessary to stay all day. Monetary donations are welcome to help defray the cost of shipping. Register online at www.downingtownlibrary.org

Fire Co. Open Houses

Fire Prevention open houses will be conducted from 6:30-9 PM on Wednesday, October 7 at the Alert Fire Co., 122 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Downingtown, and at the Minquas Fire Co., 141 Wallace Ave., Downingtown.

Antique & Classic Olds Show

The Delaware Valley Oldsmobile Club will sponsor its Fall Show in the Wallace Avenue parking lot, at Kerr Park, beginning at 9 AM, on Sunday, October 11. For details, see: <http://clubs.hemmings.com/delvaloldsclub/>.

Art Film/Discussions

Art Professor Donna Usher will present a series of four Art Film/Discussions at the new Downingtown Library on Wallace Avenue, from 5:45-8 PM. The next session, on Wednesday, October 14, will focus on "As Seen Through These Eyes," a film on how Holocaust victims created art to document and survive in Nazi camps. And on October 28, the program will be about "Maya Lin, A Strong, Clear Vision," a story about the Viet Nam Veterans Memorial created by a female, Asian, Yale architecture student. It also includes information on public statues created by Maya Lin. All the programs will be presented in the library's media room. For more details, contact Karen Smith at 610-269-2741 or e-mail Professor Usher at dusher@wcupa.edu.

Fall Book Sale

The annual Fall Book Sale, sponsored by the Friends of the Downingtown Library, will be held at the library from 5-7:30 PM on Friday, Oct. 16 and 9 AM to 4:30 PM on Saturday, Oct. 17. Donations of books in good condition are currently being collected and can be dropped off inside the library.

Roast Beef Dinner

Marshallton United Methodist Church, 1282 West Strasburg Road, as part of West Bradford Township's Fall Family Festival, will have its Roast Beef Dinner from 4:30-6:30 PM on Saturday, October 17. Open to all, the family-style dinner includes roast beef, mashed potatoes, mushroom & beef gravy, green beans, cole slaw, applesauce, rolls, dessert, and beverage. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$5 for children aged 5 to 12. Meals are eat-in or take-out. For more info, call the church office at [\(610\) 696-5247](tel:6106965247).

High School Homecoming

The High School Homecoming events, sponsored by the DHS Alumni Association, will begin on Friday, October 2, with the DHS East vs. Unionville football game and crowning of DHS East's Homecoming Queen. DHS West's Homecoming events begin on Thursday, October 15 with a parade, starting at Beaver Creek School on West Pennsylvania Avenue at 7 PM, and ending at the high school on Manor Avenue with a bon fire. DHS West's Homecoming Queen will be crowned at the DHS West vs. West Chester East football game on Friday night, October 16. The STEM Academy's Homecoming will be held on November 12. DHS alumni, as well as local residents are encouraged to attend these events.

The Age of Aquarius

Ellen Endslow, Director of Collections/Curator at the Chester County Historical Society will present an eclectic trip down memory lane, back to the 1960s, at 3:30 PM on Sunday, Oct. 18 at the East Brandywine Township building on Route 322. Ellen will tell how Chester County fit into the national timeline on topics such as civil rights, pop culture, and Viet Nam. The program is free and no RSVP is required. For more info, contact: CarolSinex@gmail.com.

Program on Medicare

You can learn about the ins and outs of Medicare and how to maximize your coverage at this program, to be held from 6:30-7:30 PM on Monday, Oct. 19 at the Downingtown Library. Register online via www.downingtownlibrary.org.

Art of German Hexing

Deb Estep, historian, author, educator and Civil War re-enactor, will speak on the history of the Art of German hexing at 7 PM Tuesday, October 20, at the West Caln Historical Society meeting in the township building, 721 Kings Highway, Wagontown. All are welcome to the free programs.

Halloween Parade

Downingtown's Halloween Parade will be held at 3 PM Saturday, October 3. The parade route will be along Pennsylvania Avenue between Beaver Creek Elementary School at 601 W. Pennsylvania Ave., heading east to the Kerr Park Gazebo. Participants in the parade must be at the staging area by 2:30 PM. Costumed participants will stage at Beaver Creek Elementary School and floats will stage at Grace Church at the corner of Lloyd and Pennsylvania Avenues. All participants will need a number in order to be judged. For more details, see: <http://downingtown.org/Documents/Temporary%20Documents/DTOWN%20HALLOWEEN%202015.pdf>.

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. The dinner will be catered by St. Anthony's Restaurant. Ticket cost: \$50. To purchase tickets, please contact Val at Borough Hall via: Vdilugi@downingtown.org or 610-269-0344, ext. 200.

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 reasonable. Call 610-269-3555 for more information.