



Downingtown Area Historical Society
Hist-O-Gram

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

The past is never done. It is not even past--William Faulkner

Vol. 6, No. 37

September 10, 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@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

What local people were talking about in August 1963

Noted below are items originally published in area newspapers 52 years ago.

- Representatives of **East Caln Township** and **Downingtown Borough** had several meetings, which initially focused on water and sewage issues. However, the discussions evolved into the possibilities of merging the two municipalities or annexation of East Caln properties adjacent to the borough's eastern border.

- Representatives of the **Daring Paper Co.** and Local 804 of the United Papermill Papermakers and Paperworkers Union announced plans to reopen the Downingtown plant, which had been closed since a "wildcat" strike in April 1962.

- Superintendent Raymond Baugher reported that **enrollment at DHS** had increased to 670 students in the 1963-64 school year, up from 544 the previous year. However, there was less significant growth at the junior high school—from 735 to 793 pupils.

- Members of **Boy Scout Troop 52**, Marshallton, who spent a week at Camp Horseshoe included: Larry Amoriello, Stan Amway, Douglas Barr, Terry and Ronald Cogan, Robert Collins, Earl Edwards, Charles Fitzgerald, Ronald Follmar, Peter Griggs, Dave Hallman, James Harkins, Carl Harper, Steve Hendry, Kenneth and Joseph Kirkner, Steve Phillips, Steve Schmeiding and Raymond Townsend.

- The staff of the Vacation Bible School at **St. James Episcopal Church**, Downingtown, included Mrs. Warren Radcliffe, Mary and Katherine Peoples, Mrs. Edward Foreman, Mrs. David Whittaker, Mrs. Yerkes Peoples, Mrs. Guy Jordan, Mrs. Frederic Seibert, Mrs. Richard Smith, Steve Pollock, Lois and Christie Jordan, Thomas McIlvaine, Virginia Priest, Richard Priest Jr, and Dan Hildebeitel.

- Officers elected to lead the **Glen Moore 4-H Club** were Ruth Ann Givler, president; Louise Jones, vice president; Becky Evans, secretary; Mary Lou Givler, song leader; and Carol Ann Burkey, reporter.

- Members of the **Downingtown Lions Club** faced the Frazer Lions in a donkey baseball game at Kerr Park in the borough.

- Homes in the **Edgewood Manor Farms** development in Thorndale, across from the Ingleside Country Club, were selling for as little as \$19,900.

- Youngsters who modeled in the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** outdoor fashion show included Diane and Sandy Piersol, Brenda and Judy Foreman, Nancy and Jeff Kohlhas, Robin Skiles and Jill Walton.

- Umpires and team managers, who were recognized at the **Lionville Little League's** swim party and spaghetti dinner at the Pennypacker Country Club, were Pete Hayes, Harry Dewees, O.J. Ashinurst, Paul Otter, Hugh Feeley, Samuel Windham and William Meredith.

- Proceeds from the **Marshallton Horse Show** were used to help pay for the West Bradford Fire Co. engine, being built at National Foam Co.

- **Bob's Sporting Goods**, 115 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, was having a Going Out of Business Sale.

E. Brandywine Bulls won Mid-Atlantic championship



The East Brandywine Bulls 12-year-old baseball team, which was part of the East Brandywine Youth Athletics program, won the Mid-Atlantic regional championship of the Cal Ripken Baseball League and advanced to the league's World Series in California. Members of the team in the photo above were, left to right: first row, Jason Hoertz (bat boy), Nate DiRocco, Chase Reardon, Zach Hoertz, Cole Rupp, Jacob Massa, Drew Turner (bat boy), Cameron Trego, Casey Caulfield; back row Dennis Reardon (head coach), Louis Lombardi, Buddy Trego (coach - dark glasses), Matt Turner, Pete Kern, Jack Ginsburg, Lonnie White, Spencer Mochulski, Chad Britt, Steve Mochulski (coach), Todd Rupp (coach)

Brief, but important

- According to an article in the August 14, 1913 edition of the *Daily Local News*, the Downingtown chapter of the **No-License Campaign Committee** held its monthly meetings in Corral Hall in the borough, and agreed to send \$50 to the organization's county headquarters. The No-License group was a large organization, which focused on opposition against hotel bars and saloons. However, the No-License people didn't promote women's right to vote, as the Women Christian Temperance Union did.

- Downingtown Borough Council struggled in the spring of 1942, according to the May 7, 1942 edition of the *Downingtown Archive*, over what to do with the **Log House**, which had been bequeathed to the borough in the late Thomas Downing's will. Council acknowledged that the building needed many repairs and that it should be moved a short distance from Lancaster Avenue, because increasing heavy truck traffic would continue to take a damaging toll on the nearly 250-year-old structure. However, the councilmen also recognized those projects would cost thousands of dollars.

Public projects created tensions in the borough 94 years ago

Noted below are news items retrieved from issues of the *Downingtown Archive* published in September and October 1921.

- The Pennsylvania Legislature allocated funds in 1921, to pave state roads running through boroughs. In addition to paving Lancaster Avenue for the first time, with state and local funding, the State Highway Department also agreed in 1921 to replace the original, three-arch, stone bridge, over the east branch of the Brandywine, which had been built in 1801. So, it sounds like Downingtown should have been enjoying all those improvements in 1921. Well, not exactly. Obviously, with all that construction going on, it was impossible for vehicles to travel through town via Lancaster Avenue. Instead, motorists travelling on Lancaster Avenue, from the east end of the borough to the west end, for example, had to take a detour which involved making a left turn onto Brandywine Avenue, and continuing for several blocks until they had to cross the rickety, old, wooden Kerr's Bridge and continue onto the unpaved Laurel Road into the Johnstown section of the borough, and finally get back on Lancaster Avenue, via Bradford and Viaduct Avenues. The detour situation was a mess until the Downingtown Business Men's Club came to the rescue by agreeing to underwrite the cost of building a second bridge across the Brandywine, at Pennsylvania Avenue. Better yet, the Business Men's Club saved a bunch of time and money on the project by moving the iron trolley bridge from its location, next to the Lancaster Avenue Bridge, and installing it at Pennsylvania Avenue. Downingtown contractor Harry Deets built the piers needed to support the relocated, narrow trolley bridge. That bridge was replaced in the 1980s.

- Almost everyone in Downingtown acknowledged that the current elementary school in the borough's east end was "inadequate, unsuitable and unsanitary." Worse yet, over-crowding in the old building had forced the school district to buy two portable buildings and spend \$2,500 furnishing them. However, building a new East Ward School would require local voters to approve of a \$100,000 bond in the November election to pay for the new building was a challenge. That wouldn't be a slam-dunk, because the Central School (later called the West Ward School after the Junior-Senior High School was opened on Manor Avenue in 1932) only cost \$10,000 to build in 1910. And local taxpayers had already agreed to kick in \$50,000 several months earlier, as the borough's portion of the cost to pave Lancaster Avenue, a project that was underway now and causing loads of traffic problems.

- Contention concerning a building in the east end of town wasn't limited to the new school. A group of plutocrats who lived in that "distinctly residential part of the town" were aghast when they learned that a gas station was going to be built at the corner of East Lancaster and Wagner Avenues, according to a letter they sent to Borough Council. The petitioners also claimed they had chosen to live in a "neighborhood for our homes to be away from the business section of the town." Several Council members failed to agree with the petitioners' request that the firm planning to operate the service be denied a building permit. But instead of getting involved in the tiff, they chose a more diplomatic route by not responding until a "full investigation on the matter" was completed.

- Borough Council also refused to respond to a petition, signed by several businessmen who were against a carnival being conducted in a lot next to the Alert Fire Co. on Downing Avenue, to benefit a local baseball team. And in an apparent effort to take the fun out of every borough resident's life, the petitioners asked Council to ban all traveling shows, circuses, carnivals and hucksters in Downingtown. That petition didn't warrant a full investigation.

- Despite all that anxiety, there was some good news in Downingtown in the fall months of 1921. Harvey Fishburne had been hired as the school district's first director of athletics. He also served as coach of the DHS football team, which had clobbered Parkesburg 65-0 in its opening game. And the AD would no longer be "embarrassed" about the high school's "abominable facilities for bathing and dressing, because plumber John Maxwell was installing showers there.

- And Cardinal Dennis Dougherty took a train (no doubt he read about all the borough's traffic problems while Lancaster Avenue was being repaved and the new bridges over the Brandywine were being built) from Philadelphia to confirm 41 youngsters at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. The cardinal and his entourage was met at the Downingtown Railroad Station by the Lukens Band, the parish's Holy Name Society and many members of congregation.

- Also, the two-mile stretch of road between Thorndale and Fisherville in Caln Township was going to be macadamized by Downingtown contractor Pollock, Johnson and Gibney in the spring. The project would cost \$70,000, with the State paying for one-half of the total, and the county and township each coughing up \$17,500.

Evening Clip & Paste sessions to begin Tuesday, Sept. 15

If your social or work obligations have made it impossible for you to come to the Clip Joint sessions on the first Sunday each month, we will start having evening sessions. The first one will be from 6:30-8:30 PM on Tuesday, September 15 at Ashbridge House, our 306-year-old headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, next to the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. You're welcome to arrive and leave either session at your convenience.

Our Wish List

The items listed below in our Wish List notes the materials the Historical Society especially needs to reach its archival goals. Obviously, we'd also love to have ANY artifact or printed material, which has a Downingtown connection, as well:

- 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 team, and the Downingtown Girls' Softball League.
- Any printed materials related to the Lionville Youth Association, West Bradford Youth Association, or the East Brandywine Youth Athletics.
- 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@downingtownareahistoricalociety.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.

It's the bridge over Beaver Creek on Manor Ave. (Route 322)



Mary Beth Fusco is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first, and only, person who correctly identified the plaque in the photo above as the one on the 64-foot long bridge on Manor Avenue (Route 322) over Beaver Creek in the borough. The contractor which built the bridge for the state was the Edward Daylor Co. The 1934 concrete bridge retains the plaque stone from the previous stone arch bridge, which was built at this location in 1805.

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.

Free ads for Non-Profits

Join the Girl Scouts

An open registration for Downingtown Girl Scouts will be held from 7-8:30 PM on Thursday, September 10, at Downingtown United Methodist Church. Registration to join the Girl Scouts is open to girls between 5 and 17 years old, or in grades K-12. Adult volunteers are also needed, and those interested can obtain information that evening. For more info, see: GirlScoutsDtown@gmail.com.

Teri's Run

The 14th annual Teri's Run and Twilight Walk will be on Friday, September **11**, beginning on Green Street in Downingtown. The event is dedicated to the memory of Downingtown's Teri Valocchi and all those who have lost their battle with Scleroderma. This year's Run will also raise funds for research and raise awareness of Chiari Malformation, Syringomyelia. The Run donated \$15,000 last year to the National Scleroderma Foundation, and it has raised over \$125,000 over the past 13 years for research into the cause and someday a cure for this debilitating disease. The Kids' Run begins at 6:30 PM, followed at 7 PM by the 5K Run and the 1.5 mile Walk. The deadline for pre-registering (\$25) is August 28. Registration cost after August 28 is \$30 for adults, \$20 for students 18 and under, and \$5 for the Kids Run. For more info, see: www.terisrun.org/

Caln Community Day

The Caln Township and the Caln Township Business Group are co-sponsors of the 9th annual Caln Community Day, from 11 AM to 3 PM on Saturday, Sept. 12 at the Caln Municipal Park in Thorndale. The event will include live entertainment, food, a children's area, a flea market sponsored by the Thorndale United Methodist Church and much more. New this year will be a Caln Police vs Thorndale Fire Department softball game at 2 PM.

Parking Lot Sale

Boy Scout Troop 216, Lionville, will hold a parking lot sale from 9 AM to 2 PM on Saturday, Sept. 12 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 104 South Village Ave., Lionville. For more info and to reserve a space, contact Karen Momot via kaz.creations@yahoo.com.

Drug Take Back Day

The Downingtown Police Department will again partner with the U. S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to participate in a Prescription Drug Take-Back Day from 10 AM to 2 PM on Saturday, Sept. 12. This is an opportunity for the public to safely discard unwanted, unused and expired prescription drugs. Bring your medications for disposal to Downingtown Borough Hall Annex Building at 4 W. Lancaster Avenue. The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. For more information, call 610-269-0344, ext. 200.

MultiSport Festival

An all-day Downingtown MultiSport Festival will be held on Sunday, Sept. 13 at Kerr Park, Downingtown, beginning at 9 AM. Events include; a kids' fun run, a group bike ride, and an adventure challenge, plus CrossFit and skateboarding tournaments and tae kwon do, roller derby and tennis demonstrations. Proceeds go to Downingtown Library, Downingtown Skate Park, the Team CMMD Foundation, and the Chester County Hero Fund. For more info, see: <http://downingtowntmultisportfestival.org/>.

Amish Quilts

Janneken Smucker, WCU History professor and author, will give a talk on “Amish Quilts: Crafting an American Icon,” when the West Caln Historical Society’s meets at 7 PM on Tuesday, September 15 at the township building, 721 W. Kings Highway in Wagontown. The meetings are free and open to the public.

Art Film/Discussions

Art Professor Donna Usher will present a series of four Art Film/Discussions at the new Downingtown Library from 5:45-8 PM, beginning on Wednesday, Sept. 16. The first session’s topic, “How Art Made the World,” will cover How humans made art and art made us human. The sessions for anyone who's interested in the connection between social/political history and how the art that occurred during that time reflects those historical issues. They will be held 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.

Field Day

Downingtown’s Parks and Recreation Commission will sponsor a Field Day from 10 AM to 1 PM on Saturday, September 19 at Kerr Park. Activities include: games for kids, prizes, raffles (prizes from Phila. Eagles and Flyers, Downingtown Playdium, Longwood Gardens) and a DJ. If you can be a volunteer that day, send an email to: downingtownparksandrec@gmail.com.

Flea Market

The Eagle/Glenmoore Lions Club will have a flea market and craft sale from 8 AM to 1 PM on Saturday, September 19 at the corner of Park Road and Little Conestoga Road in Eagle. Rain date is 9 AM to 2 PM on Sunday, September 20. Those who wish to have a space should contact: rebecca.nash@verizon.net.

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

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@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.