

Merry Christmas!



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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What & Where 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.

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, and you'd like to receive a copy of our free Hist-O-Gram directly every week, you can do that by accessing our website: www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.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.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html

Internet site is new source of historic, local news

We recently discovered another source of historic information online, about the Downingtown area, which was originally published in newspapers many years ago.

- A new school, opened in Downingtown in 1910, which was the first building constructed solely as a public school in the borough. (*Originally called the Central School, grades 1-12; it later was known as the West Ward Elementary School after the junior-senior high school—now the STEM Academy—on Manor Avenue opened in 1932*). Since a referendum had determined that the school on West Lancaster Avenue would be constructed for \$60,000 and the cost ultimately was about \$58,000, the school board **handed some \$2,000 back** to the borough.—May 8, 1910, *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

- The source of much of the pollution of the Brandywine Creek in the Downingtown Borough area was determined to be **19 water closets** emptying into the streams, as well as a large quantity of refuse from a dyeing mill.—August 21, 1907, *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

- Members of the Harrisburg Motor Club were warned about a **speed trap on Route 30** in Downingtown. To inform unsuspecting motorists, a warning sign had been erected on the highway, at both ends of the borough. Those ensnared for exceeding the speed limit had to pay a total \$14.50 (about \$200 today) in fines and costs.—September 20, 1919, *Harrisburg Patriot*.

- When Camden High School defeated the DHS boys' basketball team 46-28, 1,200 fans **jammed the Downingtown Opera House** (*later the Roosevelt Theatre*), that was the largest crowd to see a basketball game in the borough.—November 24, 1908, *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

- Downingtown was known as the “**New Bridgeton**” by people who had worked for the Cohansey Glass Works plant in Bridgeton, NJ, which had closed, and now were employed at Cohansey's plant on Chestnut Street in Downingtown. One person claimed that at least one-third of glass workers at the Downingtown plant were former Bridgetonians.—March 10, 1908, *Bridgeton Evening News*.

- The man who had broken into the **Griffith and Wollerton Store** on East Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, in the early morning hours, was captured by a dozen neighborhood residents. They were awakened when the burglar smashed the front window to gain entry to the store. Since he couldn't escape via the rear of the store, the burglar then raced out the front door, into the arms of the posse of neighborhood men, several of whom were armed with pistols. Those packing heat, including a borough physician, started firing their weapons from all sides. Miraculously, no one was wounded or killed. —October 3, 1909, *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

- Mary Walker, of Downingtown, and her bridesmaids were all ready for her late afternoon wedding at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Downingtown, which was filled with family and friends. The appointed hour, 4 PM, came and passed, but the husband-to-be, George Coughlin, of Philadelphia, didn't show up. Rev. James O'Reilly, pastor of St. Joseph's, and the congregation waited until after 5 PM, but **Coughlin never showed up**.—May 1, 1900, *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

- When the Harrisburg's Central High School girls' basketball team came to Downingtown and was defeated by the DHS quintet of girl cagers, the visitors alleged they suffered more than a lost basketball game. One Central player allegedly was **forced to drop out** of the game, “after being knocked down four times in succession by a Downingtown girl.” And almost all of the Central girls were “bruised and cut.” Worse yet, claimed a Harrisburg source, the game was played on an old theatre (*the Downingtown Opera House*) floor, which was considerably lower at one end than the other.—February 23, 1914, *Harrisburg Patriot*.

Local man was model for Remington's statue, 'The Cowboy'



Jim Sundman is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the bronze statue in the photo above as “The Cowboy,” by legendary American sculptor Frederic Remington (1861-1909). Charlie Trego of Downingtown posed on site for the statue, which was sculpted in 1908. The statue—12 feet high and nearly 11-feet wide—is located on Kelly Drive in Fairmont Park in Philadelphia.

Trego (1856-1925) owned two farms in East Brandywine, where the livestock and some of the show's cast (including Annie Oakley) connected with “Buffalo Bill” Cody's Wild West Show (1883-1913) spent the winter months, after each touring season had ended. Trego had befriended Cody when he left Chester County and worked as a cowboy out west as a young man, according to a two-part series, published in the *East Branch Citizen* in 1977. The series was based on interviews of Charles Hayes, Trego's step-grandson who lived on Race Street in Downingtown, where Trego and his wife, Carrie Ash Hayes Trego, spent their late years.

But Trego became more than Cody's “best and most trusted friend” when he was hired as an advance agent for the Wild West Show, which toured all over Europe as well as the United States. In addition to arranging for the transportation of the show's 200 cast members, 97 Native Americans, 18 buffalo, 181 horses, 10 elk, 4 donkeys, 5 longhorns, 2 deer, 10 mules, and the Deadwood Concord stagecoach that crossed the Atlantic on several ships, the job also included traveling to the next city where the show was to be put on, to make arrangements for the performers' and livestock's food and lodging. The show included trick riders, sharpshooters, stampeding herds and Indian “savages.” The cast also included Buck Taylor, the first “King of the Cowboys,” who settled in the Lyndell area with his family after the show went out of business. Trego and his wife also helped found the town of Cody, WY, at Cody's request.

What was happening here 36 years ago

Noted below are news items retrieved from December 1980 editions of the *East Branch Citizen*.

- Despite some parents' threats to sue the school district, the Downingtown School Board voted not to provide **noontime school bus service for kindergarten students** who attended half-day sessions.
- **Chemical Leaman Tank Lines** moved its headquarters from East Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown to a five-story building in Pickering Creek Industrial Park in Exton. The trucking firm had 77 terminals, and was the largest tank line in the U.S.
 - Recent **property transfers** included: 25 Dorothy Lane, Upper Uwchlan, \$79,225; 461 East Radnor Court, Uwchlan, \$79,900; 458 West Prospect Ave., Downingtown, \$53,060; 110 Tradition Lane, East Brandywine, \$69,900; 131 Woodland Circle, East Caln, \$73,000; 1645 Exeter Circle, West Bradford, \$51,780; 301 Edgemont Ave., Caln, \$52,700.
 - Coach Bob Boyer's **boys' basketball squad** rallied in the second half, to defeat Great Valley 67-56. Art Harlow, 26 points and 15 rebounds, and Mark Redfern, 15 points and 12 rebounds, paced the Whippets' efforts. The **DHS girls' basketball team** garnered its first victory by beating O.J. Roberts 41-31. The Whippets leading scorers were Beth Beebe and Becky Connelly, who each tallied nine points. The **DHS varsity wrestling squad** won the PBM Rotary Tourney, which attracted eight teams. Individual titles were won by Sean O'Donnell, John Lucerne, Tom Urban and Glenn Koser. **DHS football players** named to the all-Ches-Mont team were Bruce Tiller, Doug Hamilton, Teddy Robinson and Chet Eagles.
 - **Tom Brookover**, whose family had been involved in Downingtown's paperboard industry for 77 years, retired from Sonoco Products Co., formerly Downingtown Paper Co., after working there for 42 years.
 - **Girl Scouts** in the Downingtown Service Unit baked and donated 250 one-pound coffee tins full of cookies to patients at Embreeville State Hospital in West Bradford. Each of the tins was decorated by individual scouts, and they were judged for their designs by Hilda Rath and Mary Mahan. Winners in the most original category were Kristen Staley, Karla Mixon, Rosemary Moffit, Melanie Kefer and Cathy Pfeiffer.
 - Members of **Cub Pack 23**, sponsored by Central Presbyterian Church, who earned badges included Mark Ferris, Greg Morris, Alan Cockerham, David Hunt, Chris Tyson, Eddie Schroeder, Richard Wagner, Jeff Zeiders, Larry Bronson, Robbie Fuchs, Jeff Hines, Richard Huffman and Jamie Mendenhall.
 - **Ebenezer Baptist Church** announced plans to build a new church on Wallace Avenue in East Caln.

Here's how to trace your home's history

If you're seeking the history of your residence or other property in Chester County, click on: http://spesvox.org/prammer/EBHC/Researching_Historic_Properties_files/ResearchingGuide_DeEdAbstract.pdf.

Group Photo of the Week



First graders during the 1971-72 school year at Beaver Creek School in Downingtown were, left to right: first row, Scott Plank, Mark Keen, teacher Martha Waring, principal Richard Byerly, Michael McShane, Sherry Burns; second row, Ann Marie Coates, Brad Novak, Scott Fennelly, Casey Jamieson; third row, Lucy Toto, Jeffrey Hook, Jamie Geschwindt, Krista Lang, fourth row, Kathy Ross, Gary Ware, Mindy Titus, Jane Coy, Mario Stanford, Denise Luminella; fifth row, Jeffrey Shuhan, Rita Filoromo, Michael Eppolito, Johnna Warihay, Joey Rainey. The photo and names were provided by Joanne Heckman, former secretary at the school.

Three Restaurant Raffle winners

Val DiLuigi, Tom Lee, Jr and Mary Lou Starner were the three winners in the Historical Society's Restaurant Raffle. Each of them won \$50 gift certificates to be used at three restaurants. Downingtown area restaurants that participated in the raffle were: Downingtown Country Club, Pomodoro, St. Anthony's, Georgio's, Thorndale Craft House, Milito's, Station Tap/Bottle House, Beaver Creek Tavern and Thorndale Inn.

Vintage Ad of the Week

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

SELL

PEPPERIDGE FARM

BREAD

To Chester County Grocers

Local stores will want Pepperidge Farm Bread when the new Bakery opens in Downingtown next month. Man with truck needed to deliver to Grocers in Downingtown, West Chester, Coatesville.

Apply Now To — Mr. Davis

Phone Downingtown 1090

This ad was originally published in the April 21, 1949 edition of the *Daily Local News*.

Holiday closures

Ashbridge House, the Historical Society's headquarters, will be closed on Christmas, Sunday, December 25 and on New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1.

Free Ads for Non-Profit

Madame Curie

Ann Atkins, author, historian, educator, will present Part 2 of her program on Madame Curie when the West Caln Historical Society meets at 7 PM on Tuesday, January 17 at West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown. Everyone is welcome and the meetings free to all.

A Midwinter's Night: A dram good time!

The Thorndale-Downingtown Rotary Club will have its eighth annual Whisky Tasting and dinner at the Marshalton Inn on February 4th. Taste six single malt whisky's, receive your own tasting glass, plus a filet mignon dinner, tasting plate to match the whisky flavors, chocolate desert, silent auction, enter to bagpipe music. \$100 per person. Call 610.696.7442 or email thorndalerotary@gmail.com. Sponsorships available. Showcase your business by calling the above number.

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 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<http://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.