

Happy New Year!



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.

News about Downingtown area found in *Phila. Inquirer*

Noted below are excerpts about the Downingtown area, retrieved from articles published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*:

- A **tornado** struck Downingtown “with astonishing swiftness” in 1921. It blew down several frame houses and sheds, as if they were constructed of cardboard. Among the dozen people injured were three female residents and a two-year-old boy who were hospitalized, in critical condition. Severe property damage also included scores of utility poles, the Swan Hotel’s porch and the roof of the Frank Miller Co. Office. *Philadelphia Inquirer, March 10, 1921*
- The **Woman’s Christian Temperance Union** in Lionville had rented the barroom of the Lionville Hotel, which had not had a tavern license for several years, and used that space for its meetings. *Philadelphia Inquirer, December 21, 1894*
- An effort to prohibit part of the **Friends Meeting House in Lionville** from being used by the Uwchlan School Board for public school purposes was overruled in 1904 by the Court of Chester County. *Philadelphia Inquirer, August 25, 1904*
- Plans for the **Downingtown Opera House** (later known as the Roosevelt Theatre) on Brandywine Avenue were drawn up by a Philadelphia architect in 1902. However, the new Opera House was put up for sale in 1913. Interested parties were directed to contact Penrose Moore. *Philadelphia Inquirer, November 12, 1902 and April 27, 1913*
- The newly chartered **Downingtown Iron Works** was expected to begin producing structural and boiler iron on April 1, 1913. Earlier plans to introduce manufacturing firms in the borough had been opposed because “there would be too much noise and bustle, and the splendor of the landscape and serenity of the lives of anti-progressives would be disturbed.” *Philadelphia Inquirer, February 23, 1913*
- Several prominent Chester County farmers—including Bayard Conard and Horace Feters, both of Upper Uwchlan—organized the Pottstown and West Chester Improvement Co. in 1903. They proposed that a **trolley line**, which went through Whitford, Lionville and Ludwigs Corner, should be built. *Philadelphia Inquirer, October 22, 1903*
- Lewis Green of Lionville was charged in 1921 with attempting to **steal a kiss** from a neighbor, Mrs. Frank Cain, who was “22 years old and pretty.” Green, “also a young person and good-looking,” had made attempts on several occasions to steal a kiss” from Mrs. Cain, but she had repelled him. However, when he “grasped her by the arm and threatened to kill her if she did not yield,” she filed charges against Green. *Philadelphia Inquirer, September 24, 1921*
- Following an **engagement that lasted more than 40 years**, Hannah Carpenter, of Marshallton, finally married Thomas Cope, an East Bradford farmer. The groom was about 70 years old, and the bride was several years his junior. The wedding had been deferred years ago because of the failing health of the bride’s mother, who had died several months ago. *Philadelphia Inquirer, June 26 1900.*

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.

Vintage Ad of the Week

BONUS COUPON

NATIONALLY ADVERTISED

GAS

5 gal \$1¹⁰

Coupon Valid
Thursday, Feb. 20 Only
(One Coupon Per Car)
GAS ISLAND

CLIP THIS COUPON

**DOWNTOWN MERCHANDISE MART
AND FARMERS MARKET**

JUST EAST OF DOWNTOWN ON ROUTE 30



This ad was originally published in the *Daily Local News* in 1964.

What was happening here 52 years ago

Noted below are items published in local newspapers in the latter part of November 1964:

- The Downingtown Savings and Loan Association announced that it would purchase the **Swan Hotel** property from Gene DiSantis, after the borough landmark is demolished in the spring of 1965. A committee comprised of Ray Sheeler, Edwin Baldwin, Elmer Matthews, Robert Piersol and Ellen Ann Roberts had been investigating a possible new location for the local financial institution for about 18 months.
- West Bradford residents essentially told members of the township planning commission they wanted “**to keep a few cows and bushes**” in the township, according to results of a preliminary, long-range survey conducted by a Philadelphia consulting firm. The consultants also noted that limitations imposed by transportation, water and sewerage factors “almost ruled out” heavy industry in the township.
- The highlight of the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce’s Christmas light decorations** in the business district was the addition of a 10-foot square chandelier, which was suspended from a 30-foot tall utility pole in the borough’s center square.
- Patrol leaders of a new **Girl Scout troop in Eagle**, which met at Windsor Baptist Church, included Bonnie MacDougal, Jennie Werner, Margi Moore, and Judy Dewees. Brenda Hilton was the scribe, and Debbie Frank was treasurer. And girls who flew up from Brownies were Linda Dewees, Karen Gottier, Jean Simpson, Connie Robinson, Linda Garvine, Luanne Lyons, Kathy Hurst and Martha Sorenson.
- **Cub Pack 23**, sponsored by Central Presbyterian Church, Downingtown, was also newly chartered. George Hinkley was cubmaster, and Robert Sheeler was assistant cubmaster. Den mothers included Helen Brown, Lena Hinkley, Annie Steigher, Dorothy Swisher, Katie Umberger and Edith Walton.
- Mrs. John Piersol was elected president of the **East Brandywine Fire Co. Auxiliary**. Other officers were Mrs. Edgar Pierce, vice president; Mrs. Robert McCarty, recording secretary; Helen Laird, secretary; Mrs. Jay Lammey, treasurer; and Mrs. Hannah Harner, chaplain.
- Dorothy Collins, Robin Fowler, Dorothea Myers and Sheryl Klewer were invested into **Junior Girl Scout Troop 148 in Marshallton**. Leaders of the troop were Mrs. Richard Bedsworth, Mrs. Vernon Harper and Mrs. Robert Myers.
- **Marshallton School** students, who were instrumental students of Miss Josephine Volpe, included William Keeler, Tony Amoriello, Cathy Busby, Jeffrey Sharp, James McGeehan, David Christy, Barbara Griggs, Marybeth Grigson and Raymond Hagele.
- The Chester County Chapter of the DAR placed a brass plaque near the front door of the **Uwchlan Friends Meeting** in Lionville. The historical marker noted that the Meeting House had been used as a military hospital during the American Revolutionary War.

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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

It's the Minquas Fire Company



Gregg Nelms is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above as the Minquas Fire Co., when it was on East Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown. As Bob Lee informed us, the scaffolding on the right side of the firehouse probably was used to construct a tower where wet fire hoses were hung to dry.

And according to Charles Pennypacker's 1909 "History of Downingtown," the Minquas Fire Co., was incorporated in 1906. The firehouse was dedicated as part of the 50th anniversary celebration of Downingtown's incorporation as a borough in 1909. At that time, there were 280 members. We were unable to find any information about Downingtown's Brandywine Band. The photo, provided by Mike Miller of the Minquas Fire Co., was taken by William South, legendary Downingtown photographer. To discover more about South, check out:

www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2014%20Hist-O-Grams/September%2011%202014%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf.

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 Downingtown Area Recreational Consortium brochure, listing all classes and activities, at: www.darc.info. 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.

