



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

Vol. 7, No. 5

February 4, 2016

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 were talking about 36 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in the East Branch Citizen in early February 1980:

- Plans to develop a historic district ordinance in **Uwchlan Township** were pursued after residents and supervisors were treated to some lessons on local history, when Sue Brody, chairman of the township's Historical Commission, and Eleanor Morris, president of the French and Pickering Creeks Conservation Trust, provided a preview of the commission's historical study on the village of Lionville. Morris noted that most of the old sites in the village had been placed on the state register in 1975, to prevent a proposed cloverleaf at the intersection of Routes 100 and 113 being constructed. "So there is no question that the district will go up to the National Register," to preserve the village's historical and architectural integrity, claimed Morris. A major impetus for establishing a historic district was the possible development of the 12-acres of land in the village area, which was owned by the Radnor Corp. (a subsidiary of the Sun Oil Co.), and was a potential site for a shopping center .

- Although the **West Bradford historic committee's** proposal to establish an historic district in Marshallton succumbed in 1979 to overwhelming pressure from village residents, the committee was now considering a different approach. Instead of establishing a historic district under a more restrictive state law, the township committee was leaning toward adopting the strategy recently employed by the borough of Downingtown, which used the National Historic District model. That model, explained Downingtown's historian, Jane Davidson, placed fewer restrictions on property owners.

- **Springton Manor Farm in Wallace Township**, which was on the National Register of Historic Places, finally became part of the Chester County park system. Eleanor Grier Bartol, who had lived on the farm, had wanted to donate the 260-acre property to either Chester County or Wallace, so it would be an educational site where children could learn about a working farm. But neither government body initially accepted the offer. So Bartol decided to turn the farm over to Forward Lands Inc., a Delaware-based non-profit organization, which was committed to the preservation of open space. Over a 10-years, Forward Lands made considerable improvements to buildings on the farm property After she died in 1969, Chester County agreed to buy the farm from Forward Lands, for \$75,000.

- The **Downingtown Rotary Club** celebrated its 75th anniversary. The club's notable projects and involvement in the community over the years included development of Kerr Park and the revival of Good Neighbor Day on the Fourth of July in Kerr Park.

- After the **DHS boys' basketball team** turned over the ball 25 times and lost to Phoenixville by a 76-48 margin, the Whippets got back on track by beating Great Valley 51-41 and Henderson 49-48. Mark Redfern, 19 points, and Bob Melvin, 13, led Downingtown's offense against the Patriots. Tom Anderson tallied 12 points and pulled down seven rebounds, to help Coach Bob Boyer's squad edge the Warriors.

- Elected as officers of the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** were John Francella, president; Eloise McFalls, first vice president; John Riccardo, second vice president; and Agnes DiEuliis. Secretary-treasurer. Directors included Brian Formica, John Trego, Richard Francis, Everett Lang, Larry Persick, Jennie Freas and Clair Koser.

- The **St. James Place apartments** for seniors in Downingtown were dedicated. Almost all 39 apartments in the two-story building, built along East Pennsylvania Avenue on land formerly

owned by St. James Episcopal Church, were already occupied. Subsidized by the federal government, residents didn't pay more than 25 percent of their income for their apartment rent.

- Pins recorded by Bob Webb, 119 pounds, and Glenn Koser, 126, led the **DHS wrestling team** to a 47-5 victory over O.J. Roberts, and six Whippets got pins in a 61-0 shutout over Pottsgrove.

- The **DHS girls' basketball squad** outscored Phoenixville 36-30 in the second half, but that rally wasn't strong enough to overcome their first half deficit and the Whippets lost 61-43. However, Downingtown bounced back, by beating Great Valley 63-36 and Henderson 68-41. Top scorers in the Great Valley fray were Jeanine Cheek, 17, Tina Arcaro, 12, and Doreen Warihay, 10. The Whippets front court of Arcaro, 24; Lisa Diehl, 14; and Cheek, 12; led the Downingtown offense against Henderson.

- **DHS singers** who made the Southeastern District Chorus included: Leslie Semple, Mary Calkins, Brian Robison, Kurt Thompson, Georgia Newlin, Linda Piccone, Rob McClarin, Carol Styer, Bill Whisler, Karen Lammey, Jim Wychgel, Tom Wallace, Sue Grant, Al Madrigale, Mark Kottmeyer, Bill Kennedy and Brian Stahl.

Clip/Paste sessions slated next week

We're looking for volunteers to participate in the Historical Society's clip/paste sessions, to be held next week, from 1-4 PM on Sunday, February 7 and from 6:30-8:30 PM on Tuesday, February 8. Both sessions, which involve clipping and pasting newspaper articles for our archival collection, will be held at Ashbridge House, our 307-year-old headquarters, next to the Chick-Fil-A restaurant in the Ashbridge Shopping Center on Route 30 in East Caln.

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.

- Vintage uniforms worn by members of the DHS or Junior High sports teams or marching bands, and those worn by members of local fire departments in parades.

- Any yearbooks or newspapers published by DHS, or 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, the Lionville Youth Association, the West Bradford Youth Association, or the East Brandywine Youth Athletics.

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

Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Vintage Ad of the Week:

open for Inspection

SATURDAY, NOV. 23 — SUNDAY, NOV. 24
NOON 'TIL 6 P.M.

ROCK RAYMOND

COUNTRY ESTATES

RANCHERS \$15,900 — TWO STORYS \$16,900



- Large Living Room with Paneled Walls.
- 3 and 4 Bedrooms.
- Modern Kitchen with Royal Chef Range and Eye Level Oven.
- Formica Counter Tops by "Cosco."
- Tile Baths ● Full Basement
- Garage
- Oil Fired Baseboard Hot Water Heat.
- Completely Painted with Cook & Dunn Quality Paints.
- Gorgeous Rolling Acre with Trees.

DIRECTIONS: W. on Rt. 30 to By-pass 30 to Rt. 322. N. on Rt. 322 to Buck Rd. Right on Buck Rd. to Rock Raymond Rd. Left to Sample.

**CHESTERBROOK
CONSTRUCTION CO.**
363-7541

BRANDYWINE REALTY
269-3700

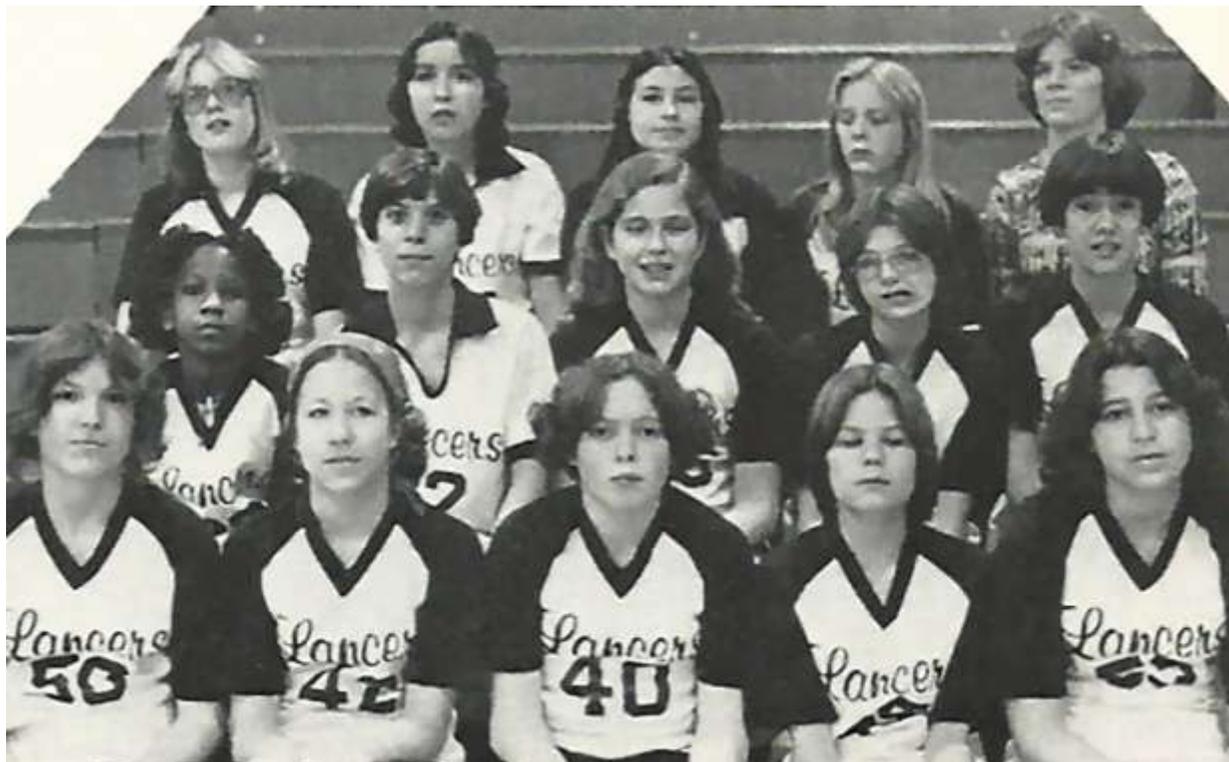
This ad appeared in the November 22, 1963 edition of the *Daily Local News*.

News items originally published 68 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in local newspapers in the latter part of July 1948:

- Members of Downingtown's **Alert Fire Co.** voted to have the bell removed from the tower of the former fire hall on Stuart Avenue in the borough, and store it in the current fire station on Pennsylvania Avenue, until a decision on what to do with bell was reached. *Editor's note: Anyone know what happened to that bell?*
- **Thirty-seven persons were injured** at the Pennsylvania Railroad station in Downingtown when a slow moving freight train backed into the rear of a passenger train, which had stopped for loading and discharging passengers. Three mail clerks on the passenger train were the most seriously injured and were transported by ambulance to Chester County Hospital. Others were treated at the accident scene by local physicians, Dr. M. W. Mercer and Dr. William Riley. The bodies of two U.S. servicemen, killed in World War II, being transported in flag-draped caskets, had to be transferred to a passenger train going west later on the night of the accident.
- **Glen Moore Methodist Church** celebrated the 75th anniversary of the laying its cornerstone for a new church. In attendance were two people who had witnessed the cornerstone ceremony in 1873: James Heck and Harry Snyder.
- Prize winners at the veterans' fair in Downingtown, co-sponsored by the local **American Legion and VFW Posts**, were: Cordelia Collins, a TV set; Charles Staub, a power lawn mower; Thomas Boyd, a motorbike; and Barbara Smith, a movie camera and projector.
- The former **Fetters-White School in Uwchlan Township** was purchased for \$5,000 by Harry Taylor, a West Chester real estate broker, at an auction. For more info and photos of the school, access: www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2013%20Hist-O-Grams/Mar%2021%202013%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf.
- A bronze plaque in memory of Downingtown's **J. Gibson McIlvain** was dedicated by Owen J. Roberts, former Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court at Camp Horseshoe. McIlvain had been an advocate of the Boy Scout movement in Chester County for many years, and was one of the founders of Camp Horseshoe.
- Morris Steifel, owner of the **Roosevelt movie theatre** on Brandywine Avenue in Downingtown, and two of his brothers, had purchased the vacant lot at 38-40 West Lancaster Avenue in the borough, with plans to build a theatre on the site.
- Downingtown's **American Legion Post** decided to sponsor a Senior Boy Scout Troop. The post's housing project for vets, on William Street in the west end of the borough, was underway. One of the 49 two-story, bungalow-style units, constructed by Leon Gable, was ready for occupancy and eight of them were under roof.
- Elected as officers at **Marshallton Methodist Church** were: Harry Wickersham, president; George Lied, vice president; Mrs. Harry Cann, treasurer; Mrs. Harold Robinson, secretary; and Roland Bean, financial secretary. Also, members of **Boy Scout Troop 52**, Marshallton, who spent a week at Camp Horseshoe, included: Robin Nelson, Richard Brooks, Dale Ellingsworth, Vernon Fellenbaum, Robert Sellers, Philip Mastrippolito, Harold Trimble, Malcolm Preston, Robert McCue, Freddie Martin and Robert Bunting Jr. And members of Marshallton's **Girl Scout Troop 10**, who participated in a day camp at West Chester's Hoopes Park, included Mary and Esther Yarnall, Glenna Hurley, Evelyn Bunting and Mary Brackbill.

Group photo of the week:



These somber-faced members of the Downington Junior High School's jayvee girls basketball team during the 1976-77 season were, left to right: first row, Tisha Eagles, Chris Lammey, Ave Gaffney, Rhonda Kaminski, Nici D'Antonio; second row, Ramona Foster, Robin Chilla, Melanie Shucker, Donna Mull, Barbara Battle; third row, Alisha Stanley, Becky Connelly, Terri Mento, Sandy Johnson, Glenda Fink, coach

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.

Officers of the Downington Area Historical Society are: Parry Desmond, president; Ernie Jameson, vice president; Marion Piccolomini, recording secretary; Francine Dague, treasurer; and Carol Grigson, archivist. The board of directors includes: Harry Helms, Mike Dunn, Phil Dague, Donna Capriotti, Annette Bethke and Dennis Walton.

It was the toll house on Route 30, just east of Downingtown



John Carbo is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to recognize what the toll station on Route 30, just east of Downingtown's border, looked like in 1900. Originally, the road was known as the Philadelphia-Lancaster Turnpike. It was the nation's first turnpike of importance, and because the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania could not afford to pay for its construction, it was privately built by the Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike Road Company. Credited as the country's first engineered road, its ground was broken in 1792. Although the road suffered from lack of use and maintenance, it later saw recovery with the invention of the automobile. In 1913, the turnpike became part of the transcontinental Lincoln Highway, and tolls continued to be collected until 1917, when the State Highway Department bought it for \$165,000, equal to \$3 million today. In 1926, it was designated as part of U.S. Route 30 along with the rest of the original United States Numbered Highways.

Free Ads for Non-Profits

Madam Marie Curie

Ann Atkins, historian and author, will present a program on Madame Marie Curie (1867-1934) at a meeting of the West Caln Historical Society at 7 PM on Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown. The meetings are always open to the public and are free.

Blood Drive

The Borough of Downingtown will host a Red Cross Blood Drive from 1-6 PM on Friday, February 26 in the Borough Hall Annex Building. To sign up to make a donation, please use the link on the borough's website - www.downingtowntown.org.

Farmers Community Market of Downingtown

The Community Farmers Market, at the Dane Décor Warehouse parking lot, 216 Washington Ave., Downingtown, will be open from 10 AM until noon on the first and third Saturdays, through March: Feb. 20, March 5 and 19. For more info, call 724-454-3674; or contact gaukerfarms@gmail.com; or via Community Market of Downingtown on Facebook.

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, 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.