



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.

Local news items first published 89 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in *The Downingtown Archive* in the spring of 1927:

- The **DHS Athletic Association** kicked off a campaign to raise \$3,000 so a 6-foot high, chain-link, metal fence and portable metal stands to accommodate several hundred fans, could be installed at the Downing-Wills athletic field, behind the high school on West Lancaster Avenue. The funds also would be used to replace the brick bathhouse with shower rooms at the school, and re-grade the baseball diamond.

However, when the possibility of raising some of the needed funds, by selling advertising space on the interior side of the fencing, was proposed, that possibility was vehemently discouraged when an *Archive* sports writer noted: “There is nothing more displeasing to the eye than row after row of sign boards, with their hideous cigarette and chewing gum posters.”

- Downingtown Police Chief Markward authorized local **Boy Scouts**, who were also students at DHS, to direct traffic at the intersection of West Lancaster and Downing Avenues, to protect youngsters who walked to and from West Ward School. Similar arrangements were being made to protect children attending East Ward School, who crossed the intersection of East Lancaster and Uwchlan Avenues. Also, Charles Ezraha became the second borough Boy Scout to attain the rank of Eagle. John Windle was the first.

- Three mailmen—William Dague in the West Ward; Charles Campbell in the East Ward; and Norman Conners, auxiliary and parcel post carrier—were hired by the **Downingtown Post Office** to make deliveries to borough residences. Home deliveries were not initiated in Downingtown until after the borough’s two Post Offices were consolidated into one office in the Borough Hall, which was opened in 1926.

- Also, Borough Council insisted that the local **American Legion Post** would have to pay \$20 per month, and not \$15 as requested, to rent a room in Borough Hall. And Council agreed to purchase a Harley Davidson motorcycle for the **Downingtown Police Department**.

- The **Downingtown Hardware Store** opened for business at 145 W. Lancaster Ave. Robert Moore was the manager.

- Dr. Larue Frain, DHS Class of 1915 who was a professor at the University of Pennsylvania, was the featured speaker at the Class of 1927’s **commencement**. There were 31 seniors in the graduating class. Also, the borough’s grammar schools were sending 60 students to the junior high school. And DHS student Mary Alice McWilliams, of Lyndell, won the County **typewriting contest**, with a record-breaking speed of 60 words per minute.

- The **Downingtown Home and School League** was providing a hot lunch for some 150 students in the cafeteria of East Ward School, and the League was pressing the School Board to offer the same lunch service to West Ward School pupils. The League also had provided playground equipment and victrolas and pianos for both elementary schools.

- Downingtown’s **two high school basketball teams** didn’t have stellar seasons. The boys’ had overall record of six wins and 12 defeats. The top two scorers were Cap Wando, 201 total points, and Ted Griffith, 98 points. The girls’ squad had a 2-15 campaign. Dorothy Van Tassel won Downingtown’s sole offensive threat, with a total of 193 points.

It was Embreeville State Hospital



Patti Strauber is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above as the Embreeville State Hospital in West Bradford. The facility started as the Chester County Almshouse in 1798, and it was intended to care for the insane, poor and neglected. The facility developed into a community where able-bodied residents earned their keep by performing tasks, from farming to sewing. Nearby was a potter's field, where indigent people were buried. The original facility was replaced by the county-owned hospital for the insane in 1898, and the state took over complete control in 1938. A juvenile detention was operated from 1971 until 1977. The hospital has been effectively closed since 1980, and how the 220-acre complex will be developed has been a bone of contention with West Bradford Township residents for several years.

What locals were talking about 52 years ago

Noted below are news items originally published in local papers in early May 1964:

- The **West Bradford Fire Co.** was seeking 1,165 books of trading stamps so it could buy a new Jeep, to replace the used 1953 Jeep, which was no longer dependable, according to Fire Chief William Hill.
- The restored **Uwchlan Meeting House** in Lionville was dedicated by the Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan. The Uwchlan Meeting was established in 1714, and the meeting house was built in 1756. It was remodeled in 1875. During the Revolutionary War, military surgeon Dr. Bodo Otto, who established the American Army hospital at nearby Yellow Springs, commandeered the Uwchlan Meeting House and converted it into a military hospital. Beginning in 1904, Lionville High School used the meeting house for classes, until 1932 when the school closed. Subsequently, the building was occupied by Lionville Elementary School, until 1960. The Uwchlan Grange, which had been meeting in the building since 1906, purchased the property in 1920. However, the graveyard continued to be owned by the Friends Meeting.
- Mrs. Fanny Menna, the oldest mother, crowned the Blessed Mother, as the **Ladies of St. Joseph's Catholic Church**, Downingtown, had a May Procession. Other participants included: Mrs. Lucille Sabellico, youngest mother; Mrs. Peter Short, youngest grandmother; Mrs. Anna Merkt, youngest great-grandmother; Mrs. Ann Viscichini, mother with the greatest number of

living children; Mrs. Rita Cook, mother with the most children attending St. Joseph's School; and Mrs. Joseph Driscoll, mother of the youngest baby. Elected as officers were Mrs. Norman Sandler, president; Josephine Valentino, vice president; Mrs. John Belnomi, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Francis Dailey, treasurer.

- Elected as officers of the Women's Christian Service group at **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Mrs. Paul McCombs, president; Mrs. Walter Myers, vice president; Mrs. Donald Tyson, secretary; and Mrs. Harvey Young, treasurer. Committee chairmen included Mrs. Charles Barron, spiritual life; Mrs. Robert Troup, missionary; Mrs. Howard Adams and Mrs. Elmer Kohls, promotion; Mrs. Lambert McGuckin, literature and publications; Mrs. George Wagner, social relations; Mrs. Charles Ezra, student work, Mrs. Norman Whiteside, supply; and Mrs. Raymond, Schollenberger, children's work.

- Members of **Brownie Troop 83**, Downingtown, who attended a roller skating party at the Exton Skating Rink, included: Kathy Cozzone, Gail and Mary Beth Dague, Christine Dailey, Janice Mattioni, Debbie Valentino, Pam Fay, Barbara Loftus, Alexis Ziobro, Mary Kessel, Rose Mascherino, Susan Romano, Patty Mento, Rhonda Madrigale, Anne Huhn and Lisa Slayer.

- Tony Cosenzo accounted for two individual victories—220-yard dash and the shot put—as the **Downingtown Junior High track squad** won a triangular meet against North Brandywine and Kennett. Other Lancers who recorded individual wins were Eric Horsey, Mike Westman, Dave Bostic, Ronald Donnon and Donald Miller.

- Cindy Dellet and Shirley Smith each scored two goals, and Barbara Hadfield tallied one, as the **DHS girls' lacrosse team** tied Phoenixville 5-5.

- Award winners at the **DHS Sports Banquet** included: Rich DiEugenio and Janine Davis, most outstanding all-around boy and girl athletes; Mike Pollock and Jan Fetherolf, outstanding basketball players; Leroy Cox, wrestling; DiEugenio, outstanding football lineman; Andy Harden, outstanding back; and Clark Bartell, the Coaches' Award.

- Members of the **Cub Pack** sponsored by Fairview Presbyterian Church, Glenmoore, who earned badges were Barry Lewis, Steve Shoemaker, Roger Ire, Peter Hickey, Scott Sharp, James Burkey, Alan Chilcote, Robbie Gabriel, Mike Kelly, Peter Hickey and Mike Taylor.

- **DHS students** Kathryn Reichard and Robin Mattson were nominated for the Achievement Awards in a program sponsored by the National Council of Teachers. And winners of the Americanism Essay Contest, sponsored by the DHS National Honor Society, were: James Martin, Beaver Creek Elementary School; and Jeanne Dorsey, Downingtown Junior High; and Sandra Irwin, DHS.

- New coach Bob Boyer's **DHS baseball squad** registered a 1-0 win over Spring-Ford, as John Piersol scored the winning run on a throwing error, and catcher Rich DiEugenio threw out two base runners trying to reach second base. Also, the Whippets shut out O.J. Roberts 3-0, as Bill Anderson limited the Wildcats to four hits in seven innings, and sealed the win with a home run in the final frame.

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

Group Photo of the Week:



Back in 1965, members of the Duplicating Club at DHS, were fascinated with the mysteries of a mimeograph machine and how to clean their purple-ink-stained hands. They included, left right, Larry Nuse, Barry Piersol, Priscilla Asparagus, Connie Hamilton, Linda Polonic and June Stenka.

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:

The Opportunity

is offered the citizens of Downingtown and vicinity to see Florida from our own home town

**Tuesday Evening
JULY 20, 1926**

**At 8.30 O'Clock (Standard Time) In The
MINQUAS GYMNASIUM**

MR. SHARP of the DAVENPORT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE will give a Free Illustrated Lecture on the

FLORIDA OF TODAY !

His talk covers one to old St. Augustine with its Fountain of Youth, its Slave Market and the Oldest House in America. Then down the World's Most Famous Beach to Daytona. The journey takes us to Orlando, the city beautiful; Davenport, in the Hills of Orangeland; Mountain Lake, Winter Haven, Lakeland, Tampa, across the Famous Gandy Bridge to St. Petersburg, to Tarpon Springs, the Sponge Market of the world and many of the most picturesque spots of the State.

All are welcome and will not be asked to make any investments — just an hour of recreation and play.

This ad appeared in the July 15, 1926 edition of *The Downingtown Archive*.

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'd like to receive a copy of our FREE Hist-O-Gram directly every week, you can do that 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

Farmers Market

The Downingtown Farmers Market has returned to Kerr Parks. It will be open from 9 AM to 1 PM on Saturdays. For more info, see: <http://growingrootspartners.com/downingtownt-farmers-market>.

Shredding/E-Waste

There will be a shredding and E-Waste events for borough residents only at Downingtown Borough Hall, 4 W. Lancaster Ave. on Saturday, May 14. The shredding will be available from 9 AM to noon; 3 box limit; no hard bound books, binders, spiral notebooks or plastics. The E-Waste collection, from noon to 1 PM. Items collected FREE include: computers, networking equipment, printers, LCD monitors, wires, cable, AC adapters, USP batteries and open toner cartridges. CRT TVs and monitors will be accepted for a fee. These will NOT be accepted: smoke detectors, light bulbs, monitors with broken glass, alkaline batteries, paper or cardboard, furniture, large appliances, microwaves, and items with refrigerants.

All Wheels Consignment Sale

The Downingtown Parks and Recreation Commission will have an All-Wheels Sale (bikes, skateboards, scooters, roller skates) at Kerr Park from 9 AM to noon on Saturday, May 14. For more details, see: <http://downingtownt.org/Documents/ParksRec%20Commission/AllWheelsEventPR2016.jpgee>.

Lecture series in E. Brandywine

East Brandywine's Historical Commission will present the following lecture at 3:30 PM on Sunday May 15: Mathew Kalos will discuss what he's uncovered in his archaeological digs in Chester County, at the East Brandywine Township Building, 1214 Horseshoe Pike, Guthriesville.

Craft & Vendor Show

The Women's Auxiliary of St. Anthony's Lodge will sponsor a Spring Craft and Vendor Show at the Lodge, at 259 W. Church St., Downingtown, from 10 AM to 2 PM on Saturday, May 21. For more info, see: contact 484-459-1905 or staladies@hotmail.com.

Farm Bureau's Agriculture Science Lab

Deb Ellis, egg farmer and PA Farm Bureau educator/director, will discuss "Early Learning About Agriculture" and the Farm Bureau's Agriculture Science Lab at 7 PM on Tuesday, May 17 in a program sponsored by the West Caln Historical Society and held in the West Caln Township building, 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Flea Market/Craft & Antique Sale

Table space is available for a flea market/craft/antique sale from 9 AM to 2 PM on Saturday, May 14 (rain date May 21) to be held on the front lawn of the Caln Township Municipal Building, Municipal Drive, Thorndale. Sponsored by the Old Caln Historical Society. Call Joan at 610-384-9496 or Lois at 610-384-8153 for more information.

Relay For Life

The American Cancer Society's annual Relay for Life will begin at 10 AM on Saturday, May 21 at Downingtown West High School. For more details, see: http://main.acsevents.org/site/TR?pg=entry&fr_id=74705.

Victory Run for Ryan

Victory Brewery is sponsoring a road race at 1 PM on Sunday, May 22. For details, see: www.runtheday.com/registration/race_info/run-for-victory2.

Fine Arts Festival

The Downingtown Main Street Association will sponsor a Fine Arts Festival at 202 E. Lancaster Ave., from 10 AM to 6 PM on Saturday, May 28 and 10 AM to 5 PM Sunday, May 29. For more info, see: www.downingtownfinearts.com/aboutdfaf.html.

Golf Outing & BBQ

Supporters of the DHS West football team are sponsoring a golf outing, BBQ and silent auction at Whitford Country Club on Monday, June 20. For more info, see: www.dwhsfootball.com/golf-outing-auction.

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.