



## Downingtown Area Historical Society **Hist-O-Gram**

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

[www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](http://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](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

# What locals were talking about 68 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in area newspapers in the latter part of May 1948:

- Caroline Matthews and Ted Hammon won top honors at the seventh annual **DHS Farm Show**, which was the highlight of the social scene at the high school in the 1940s and 1950s. The three-day show was sponsored by members of the school's Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Future Homemakers of America (FHA) chapters. Matthews and Hammon won the most prizes in several competitions that included bred cattle, poultry, vegetables and fruits, canned goods, handmade clothing, flowers, baked goods, and needlework, in which the FHA and FFA members participated. The show's other attractions included a concert by the symphonic band, including featured soloists Annabelle Warnick, flute, and Janet Kreibel, marimba. And the crowd was entertained by vocals sung by Mary Trego, Arleen Hoskins, Joan Garrison, Eleanor Detterline, Margaret Sciarretta, Philomena Cozzone, Aletha Hershey, Mary Jane Detterline and Margarete Ciarlone. The show also included exhibits by local farm equipment dealers at the football stadium. Helen Doran was crowned Harvest Queen.

- About 1,500 people attended the opening of the new, \$30,000 recreation facility on the second floor of the **Minquas Fire Co.**, which had been the scene of many dances and was the home court for the DHS basketball team in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In addition to the main room with a 58-foot-long bar, a TV set and bronze plaques with a Lady Godiva motif, the new recreation area also included an office and a restroom, plus areas for games such as shuffleboard and darts. Charles Bloom was steward of the new club room, as well as a fire engine and ambulance driver. Officers of the Minquas at the time were George Perry, president; Howard Loughlin, vice president; Hallan Usher, secretary; and Martin Binder, Bennett Norris and Percy Hyde, trustees.

- Joe Newlin, who had been a police officer in the borough for 20 years, was appointed as Downingtown's Police Chief, after Chet Glisson retired several weeks earlier.

- The Charles F. Moran **American Legion Post** approved the purchase of a residence on East Lancaster Avenue in the borough, next to the Downingtown Library, for \$17,000. Before buying its new headquarters, the Post had been conducting its business in Borough Hall. Newly elected officers of the Post were Edward Spamer, commander; Leon Gable, first vice commander; Duer Smedley, second vice commander; Francis Summers, adjutant; Harlan Clavier, financial officer; Paul Dague, historian; Richard Lowry, service officer; Rev. David Stewart, chaplain; and Jonathan Windle, sergeant-at-arms.

- Members of the **Odd Fellows' Pilgrim Lodge, Lionville**, who were installed as officers were: John Benner, noble grand; John Miller, vice grand; Russell Allison, secretary; Kenneth Fell, treasurer; Schuyler Rennard, warden; Samuel Supplee, conductor; Kenneth Kirkner, chaplain; and Everett Wilson, representative to the home for the aged and orphans in Philadelphia.

- Officers of the Hi-Y Club at **Marshallton Elementary School** were Jo-Anne LeFevre, president; Robert Pierce, vice president; Carlene Yetter, secretary; and Patsy Miller, treasurer.

- Installed as officers of the **DHS Student Council** were: John Windle, president; Walter Epeheimer, vice president; Dolores Cavanaugh, secretary; Margaret Sciarretta, treasurer; Arvilla Reynolds, tribunal judge; and Mary Jane Detterline, tribunal clerk.

- Winners of the costume competition at the Sunday School's Halloween party at **Central Presbyterian Church** included: Jeanne and Johnny Bicking, best dressed; Judy Simmons and Linda Aumiller, most original; Barbara Zittle, funniest; Nancy Pannebaker and Mary Ann

Phillips hardest-to-guess. Bruce Nixdorf, Helen Simmons and Harriet Seibert won the placing clothes pins in the bottle contest.

- Mr. and Mrs. Walter McClure were doing extensive renovations to the building at 140 East Lancaster Avenue in the borough before they opened the **Colonial Bakery** there. The building had served as the East Downingtown Post Office for decades, before the two Post Offices in Downingtown were consolidated and moved into the new Borough Hall in 1926.

- Members of the **Ladies Auxiliary of St. Anthony's Lodge**, Downingtown, who won prizes for their costumes at the group's Halloween Party, included: Margaret DiLiberato, prettiest; Josephine Manetta, ugliest; Irma Del Paggio, most original; Ada Celii, Mary Celii and Rose DiBerardinis, best group; Rose DiSilvestro, and Romaine Capriotti, hardest-to-guess.

- West Chester rallied in the second half and the **DHS football team** lost to the Warriors 13-6 in a heartbreaker. The Whippets scored their lone TD when Joe Sciarretta caught a 30-yard pass from Bill Hayes in the second quarter. Downingtown's Andy DiAntonio, tackle, and Sonny Milano, center, were cited for their "outstanding" play by DHS coach Don White.

The Whippets bounced back the following week with a 20-9 victory over Bridgeport. They got on the scoreboard in the first quarter on a 30-yard pass play, from Bill Hayes to his brother, Pete. Then Phil Boggs scored on an end run in the third period, and Bill Davis sewed up the win when he ran back an interception 50 yards for Downingtown's final tally.

- Officers elected to lead the **Downingtown Visiting Nurses Association** included: Mrs. William Gibbs, president; Mrs. Stuart Outerbridge, vice president; Fannie McIlvaine, recording secretary; Mrs. Robert McIlvain, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Joseph Huggins, treasurer.

- At a reorganization meeting of the **Downingtown Christmas Committee**, these officers were elected: Mrs. Everett Hoopes, president; James Fennelly, vice president; Mrs. Nels Olsen, secretary; and Herbert Kreider, treasurer. Howard Kennedy agreed to impersonate Santa at the children's Christmas party.

## Noteworthy events in Downingtown 61 years ago

Noted below are news items retrieved from editions of The Archive, published in May 1955:

- A concert at **East Ward School** featured: a brass quartet comprised of James Dancy, Stanley Landis, Mary Englerth and James Yamshak; and selections played by these orchestra members: Kenneth Klunk, Mary Louise LeFevre, Robert Shank, Sandra Thompson, Nancy Pannebaker, Linda Aumiller and Patricia Robinson, clarinet; Gerald Matthews, saxophone; Ann Nelson, Barbara Thompson, Carol Shisler, John Parsons and Barbara Rothas, violin; Frank Newlin and Paul Katherman, cello; Dexter Carter and Ruth Lowe, bass violin.

- Patricia Sciarretta and Norris Miller were named the high school's Outstanding Athletes at the **DHS Sports banquet**.

- Huston Mattson was elected to his 13<sup>th</sup> term as president of Local 414 of the **United Paperworkers of America Union**. Other officers of that Downingtown-based Local were James Summers, vice president; Ashton Lammey, recording secretary; and George Meacham, secretary-treasurer.

- **Downingtown School District** teachers and administrators who performed in their version of the Broadway play "January Thaw" included: Emily Lewis, James Fry, Janice Weiss, Nancy Kern, Sally Lumis, Mildred Wilson, William Byham, Michael Remetz, Suzanne Rogers, Hibbert Wells, Joseph Poltrone, Henry Godshall, Thomas Stoner and Charles Emery.

## **Downingtown Woman's Club has dissolved**

After helping to provide sustenance to our community for more than 100 years, the Downingtown Woman's Club has disbanded. If you think the local ladies spent most of their time sipping tea, think again. The Woman's Club was an integral part of the Downingtown area's fabric for decades. And the club has been an especially important force after it sold its clubhouse on Manor Avenue about 20 years ago, and showered much of the proceeds from that sale on many community projects and organizations. Despite its dissolution, the club has prudently arranged, via the Chester County Community Foundation, to continue being a significant benefactor in our community.

### **Vintage Ad of the Week**

**If You Want a Taxi  
And Want It Quick  
Call 265**

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**DAY and NIGHT SERVICE  
Anywhere and Everywhere  
CLOSED CARS**

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**ROBT. BACKENSTOSE, 209 W. Lancaster Ave.**

This ad was first published in the *Downingtown Archive* in October 7, 1926.

# It's the water tower on Bondsville Rd.



Scott Piersol is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person to correctly identify the site in the photo above as the water tower at East Brandywine's Bondsville Mill Park, which now is part of the township's park system.

According to information on the township's website (<http://ebrandywine.org/286/Bondsville-Mill-Park-Committee>), the first woolen factory was founded at the Mill Park site in the 1800s by Abraham Bond, who also established the village of Bondsville. Initially powered by water from Beaver Creek, that mill produced Kentucky jeans. During the Civil War, the mill manufactured uniforms for Union soldiers.

The Collins and Aikman Corp. bought the property in 1927. And during World War II, the mill produced many products for the military, including fabric for the lining of Air Force jackets. After the war, the mill manufactured men's and women's clothing fabrics, as well as a woven nylon used by the automobile industry for seat upholstery. In time, the mill was closed and the site fell into disrepair.

The township acquired the 47-acre parcel in 2005, and it has used open space funds to clean up the property and make the collapsing buildings safe. The Park was opened to the public in 2015, and the Bondsville Mill Park Committee continues to expand the trails network and further stabilize the structures there.

Volunteers who are members of the Bondsville Mill Park Committee are: David Kirkner, chairman, James Buczala, vice chairman, Martha Chamolin, Eleanor Buczala, Walter Dawson, Deke Inslee, Arne Jensen, Donald Leong, Scott Piersol, John Schroeder, Charles Stone and Matthew VanLew.

# Please help us fix the smokehouse

We have been sending Hist-O-Grams to friends, as well as members, of the Downingtown Area Historical Society for six years. And since many of the more than 900 of the subscribers who receive our Hist-O-Gram every week aren't official members of the Historical Society, we are asking you for some help.

As you can understand, our commitment to preserve and maintain Ashbridge House, our 307-year-old headquarters, is a constant challenge. Currently, we have to make repairs to the small smokehouse, next to Ashbridge House on our property. It's a 19th Century structure that requires parts of the stone walls to be repointed and a cement floor has to be installed.

That's why we are asking you to show your appreciation for the free Hist-O-Gram, which arrives via the Internet at your home every Thursday, by sending us a tax-deductible donation.

**And if you can't make a donation, we will continue to send you our Hist-O-Gram, free-of charge, every week.**

To help us make repairs to the smokehouse, kindly complete the form below and mail it—with a check made out to "DAHS" —to: Downingtown Area Historical Society, P. O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335. Or you can make an online donation via: [www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Donate.html](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Donate.html).

Your generosity is most appreciated.

Parry Desmond, President  
Downingtown Area Historical Society

P.S. Have you noticed the two new sections—the Vintage Ad of the Week and the Group Photo of the Week—we've recently added to the Hist-O-Grams?

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street, Town, State & Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Brief but important

- Ashbridge House, our 307-year-old headquarters on Route 30 in East Caln, **will be closed** on Sunday, May 29 because that day is part of the Memorial Day weekend.
- When Downingtown started to enjoy **phone service in 1906**, and its office was on the second floor of the Cohansey Glass Co. on Chestnut Street., the first subscribers were: Dr. Bremmerman, Sam Blacks' tobacco shop and pool parlor, Harry MacFarland's jewelry store, and the Downingtown Manufacturing. Co. By 1924, there were 700 subscribers to the phone service. Direct dialing (no contact first with an operator) was introduced in 1956.
- Ed Thomas informs us that there's an **interesting connection** between the Ingleside Diner and Bakery in Thorndale, which was the *Where and What Is This?* photo in the May 19 Hist-O-Gram, and Ed's cousin, Jerry Thompson (DHS Class of 1960), one of the handy volunteers at Ashbridge House, who was pictured in last week's Hist-O-Gram. Ed tells us that Jerry's mom, Mae Thompson, was the person who baked those wonderful pies at Ingleside, which many people raved about.

## Group Photo of the Week



In 1976, the DHS boys' jayvee track team included, left to right: front row, Ed Zink, Mike Moore, Peter Troy, Bill Cantor, Richard Craig, Joe Weldon, Jeff Haas, Steve Ziobro, Pat Kinter; back row, manager Jesse Shutt, Scott Harrop, Ed Grabowski, Alex Roman, Tom Newlin, Jim Jameson, Mike Kane, Jim Shanley, Coach Bob Schnure.

# 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.

- **T-shirts whose artwork and lettering promote a Downingtown area event, business, team or organization.**
  - 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](mailto:Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org).

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

## Free Ads for Non-Profits

### ***Block Party for Playground***

There will be a Block Party and Barbecue from 4-7:30 PM on Saturday, June 4 at East Ward School, to raise funds for new playground equipment. Tickets are \$80 for a family of four or \$25 per person. For more details, see:

<http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eclbs2yydb8cf32b&llr=qazex5cab>.

### ***Mac & Cheese Cook-Off***

The Rotary Club of Thorndale-Downingtown will have its annual Chester County Mac & Cheese Cook-Off from noon to 4 PM on Sunday, June 5 at Kerr Park. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for kids (6-12). For more details, check: [www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-chester-county-mac-cheese-cookoff-tickets-21162657077](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/2016-chester-county-mac-cheese-cookoff-tickets-21162657077).

### ***History of Weaving Art***

Linda Beiler, historian, author, artist, educator, will talk about the "History of Weaving Art" when the West Caln Historical Society meets at 7 PM on Tuesday, June 21. Beiler wrote *Wheat Weaving & Straw Art*, part of Stackpole Books' Heritage Crafts Today Series. The meeting, which is free and open to the public, will be at West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown.

### ***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.downingtowntfinearts.com/aboutdfaf.html](http://www.downingtowntfinearts.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](http://www.dwhsfootball.com/golf-outing-auction).

### ***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/downingtown-farmers-market>.

### ***Brochure on DARC classes & activities***

You can gain access to the latest DARC brochure, listing all classes and activities, at: [www.darcinfo.com](http://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](mailto:JPCheryl@verizon.net).