



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. 8, No. 16

April 20, 2017

What & Where Is This



The first person to correctly identify the scene in the photo above will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your response to: dahs19335@gmail.com.

Officers of the Downingtown Area Historical Society are: Phil Dague, president; Jim Sundman, vice president; Marion Piccolomini, recording secretary; Lauren Fagan, treasurer; and Donna Capriotti, corresponding secretary. The board of directors includes: Harry Helms, Mike Dunn, Dennis Walton and Jay Worrall. Carol Grigson is the archivist.

What was happening here 86 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* in the autumn of 1931:

- There were increased efforts in the Downingtown area in 1931 to help needy families, as the **Great Depression** continued. The campaign initiated by the welfare committee of the Downingtown Lions Club had evolved to the point that the Ladies Aid Societies of the churches in the community, under the direction of Mrs. Penrose Larkin, were soliciting donations of fruits and vegetables, which were canned in the kitchen of the Downingtown Woman's Club. And circulars--requesting that used clothing should be taken to the welfare committee's storeroom on Brandywine Avenue--were distributed throughout the borough. Also, Downingtown's Council extended the deadline for payment of borough taxes by two months.

- Enrollment in **Downingtown Junior-Senior High School** had increased from 265 students in the previous school year to 304 in the 1931-32 school year. But the school system's efforts to expedite the construction of a new secondary school, to resolve the over-crowded conditions in the old school building on West Lancaster Avenue, had several challenges before construction on the project could begin. Although the purchase of 15 acres of farm land, where the school was to be built on the east side of Manor Avenue, almost had to be accomplished by condemnation, an amicable arrangement was made with the Pollock family. And the school board decided to await the action of bidders on the \$160,000 bond issue before awarding construction contracts on the project.

- A macadam surface applied to the four-mile road in **West Bradford Township**, which ran between Thorndale and Marshallton, was completed. The State Highway Department project, was done by contracted local labor, at a cost of \$24,000.

- **Boy Scout Troop 10**, sponsored by Central Presbyterian Church, Downingtown, was reorganized. The troop committee included Guyon Miller, Clarence Dorsey, William Ludwick, Evans Miller, A. H. Standley, John MacNabb, George Roop and William Mittel. Norman Algiers was the scoutmaster.

- A choir society was established at **St. James Episcopal Church**, Downingtown. Officers of the choir were Chandler Roberts, president; W. W. E. Ash, vice president; Dora Walker, secretary; Leona Lightcap, treasurer; Mrs. Willard McKinney, choir mother; and John Noll, librarian. Elizabeth Hines was the newly appointed organist.

- A junior band was being organized at **East Ward Elementary School**, under the direction of Amos Miley, who also was the DHS band director. Also at East Ward, Ruth Shumway, the school district's music director, had begun offering after-school violin classes. The violin students included Antoinette Duca, Pauline Detterline, Marjorie Holman, Zillah Shaw, Lena Shaw, Evelyn Petrella, Evelyn Brown and Marguerite Scarborough.

- Although the **DHS football team** suffered several losses in the beginning of the season, Coach Bill McAlpine's Papertowners closed the 1931 campaign with two major victories. The biggest win was the 31-0 defeat of their biggest rival, Coatesville, when Downingtown's Morris "Buzz" Yohn ran for two TDs and passed for three more scores. Yohn's passing efforts also highlighted Downingtown's final game, a 12-0 win over Pottstown. The six students selected, from a group of 15 aspirants, to be cheerleaders for DHS football games, were Charles Elston, Helen Hyde, Ralph Entekin, Christine Travaglini, Dorothy Diffenderfer and Joseph Fennelly.

It's the Lionville Friends Meeting House



Rahn Brackin is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person who correctly identified the site in the photo above as the Friends Meeting House in Lionville. 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. The restored Uwchlan Meeting House in Lionville was dedicated by the Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan in 1964.

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_DeadAbstract.pdf

What locals were talking about 67 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in local newspapers in the latter part of January 1950:

- Over 200 applications for Pennsylvania's World War II veterans' bonus were distributed to members of the **Downingtown VFW Post**.
- A representative of the Bell Telephone Co. told members of the **Downingtown Lions Club** that there were 886 telephones in Downingtown in 1926, and that figure had grown to 3,493 by 1950.
- Honored at the **DHS Music Association's** annual banquet were Virginia Brown, Julia Menna, Louise Bartelmo, Irene Hoskins, Mabel Laird, Mabel Summers, Amy Langham, Theresa Valentino, Joan Lenhardt, John Shistler, Charles Rhines, Leo Ciarlone and Joseph Streamer
- Members of **Messiah Lutheran Church**, Downingtown, voted to build an addition to the Sunday School building, at a projected cost of \$14,000. Plans for the addition included two classrooms, a study and a kitchen.
- Installed as committee chairmen of **St. Anthony's Lodge**, Downingtown, were Enio DiBerardinis, investigation committee; Charles DiSante, scholarship; Nello Caporale, elections; Joseph Mento, charity; Lewis Capriotti, athletics; Edward Stranere, chaplain; and Benny Del Paggio, publicity.
- The **Downingtown Moose Lodge** voted to build a new home on its property on West Lancaster Avenue. Creston Shoemaker was chairman of the building committee.
- George Davidson, commander of **Downingtown's American Legion Post** appointed William Wharry, Mark Bareford and Walter Crandall to lead a membership campaign.
- Elected as directors of the Circle Riders at **Hopewell Methodist Church**, East Brandywine, were Mrs. Robert Templin, Mrs. Arthur Green, Patti Piersol and Marian Hershey.
- Members of the **Uwchlan Farmers Club** elected the following officers: Oscar Darlington, president; Stephen Moore, secretary and Mary Pyle, pianist.
- West Chester High School's basketball team rallied in the fourth quarter to defeat the Whippets 51-39. Ronald Hogg led the **DHS hoopsters** with 12 points. And although the "inexperienced but scrappy" **Downingtown Junior High basketball team** led in the third quarter, the Lancers succumbed to West Chester 29-23.

Mistake in April 13 Hist-O-Gram corrected

We made a mistake in last week's Hist-O-Gram, which included items originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* in March of 1956. One item should have read: "Mrs. William Keen was elected president of the **JUNIOR Downingtown Woman's Club**. Other officers were Mrs. David Kohlhas, vice president; Mrs. Robert Kaster, recording secretary; Mrs. James Echols, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Joseph Travaglini, treasurer." That's one more reason why we should recognize that anyone in their 80th year shouldn't be the Hist-O-Gram editor.

Vintage Ad of the Week

Greenleaf Pharmacy

Half-Price Sale

Jergen's Toilet
Soap

4 ^{25c Cakes}
for **50c**
6 ^{15c Cakes}
for **45c**

25c Marathon
Razor Blades

2 ^{pkgs.}
for **25c**

35c Shaving Cream

2 Tubes
for **35c**

25c Talcum Powder

2 Cans
for **25c**

50---5c
CIGARS \$1.15

This ad was originally published in the August 21, 1931
edition of the *Downingtown Archive*.

Brief, but important

Noted below are several items published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* in the late 19th Century:

- Shortly after Rev. William Ware was installed as rector of **St. James Episcopal Church**, Downingtown, he began to reduce the parish's \$1,500 debt, according to an article in April 1882. The indebtedness was slashed after parishioners, who pledged to contribute a total of \$10, paid in four \$2.50 installments, in special collections.
- The **West Bradford School District** agreed, in August 1870, to build a new school for \$1,470 in the Romansville section of the township.
- Several real estate investors planned, in June 1878, to start a **silk production enterprise** on a 20-acre tract near the railroad depot in Downingtown. "Mulberry trees are to be planted, cottages built, and a silk farm established, which will renew and make permanent the industry, which was begun with so much promise some 40 years ago, but failed for want of due training and teaching."
- The **Masonic Hall** was destroyed and several neighboring commercial buildings were damaged by a fire at West Lancaster and Stuart Avenues in Downingtown, in 1892. (*Editor's note: The Alert Fire Co., the borough's sole fire company at the time, had only one truck. So, Coatesville's Washington Fire Co. responded to the Alert's request for help by transporting an engine and firefighters, via a rail cars provided by the Pennsylvania Railroad, to the fire site in Downingtown. The Washingtonians arrived at the site just six minutes after receiving the Alert's call for assistance.*)
- The purchase and location of a pipe organ at **Central Presbyterian Church** in Downingtown grew into legal battle between Rev. Charles Craven, pastor of the church, and Col. A. P. Tutton, a member of the church's board of trustees. Tutton was accused of "defying church authorities, trying to divide the congregation, misrepresenting facts, failing to pay his obligations to the church, and hostility to the pastor." Following a church trial, conducted by the Presbytery of Chester in 1891, it recommended that Tutton "tender his resignation as elder."

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. Also on our website's home page is access to an archive of every edition of the Hist-O-Gram we have published since 2010.

You also can find on the **right side of the home page of our website**, www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org, access to:

1. **Hist-O-Gram Archives**, which provides access to every Hist-O-Gram we have published since 2010.
2. **Then and Now Videos**, which provide short video clips depicting how local sites have changed over the years.

Free Ads for Non-Profits

Craft Show

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Minquas Fire Co. will have a Vendor and Craft Show at the firehouse, 141 Wallace Ave., Downingtown, from 11 AM until 3 PM on Saturday, April 22. On display will be a fire engine for kids, plus fire gear for photo ops.

Paper Shredding

Wiggins Shredding will conduct a free paper shredding event at Bradford heights Elementary School, 1330 Romig Road, West Bradford, from 9 AM until noon on Saturday, April 22. You can bring up to four packing boxes of paper materials—no cardboard—to be shredded.

Chamber Dinner

The Downingtown-Thorndale Chamber will have its 72nd annual dinner at the Downingtown Country Club at 5 PM on Thursday, April 27. The event include presentation of the Citizen of the Year award to Jack Hines and the Business of the Year award to the DeMatteo Insurance Agency. To order tickets and for more details, see:

<http://dtrcc.com/ChamberDinner.html>

History of Dowlin Forge

Susannah Brody will present a program on the History of Dowlin Forge at 2 PM on Sunday May 7, at Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site in Elverson. Susannah is a storyteller, historian and author of several books on local history. The free program is sponsored by the Friends of Hopewell Furnace.

St. Anthony's Fundraiser

The Women's Auxiliary of St. Anthony's Lodge, 259 Church St., Downingtown, will have its quarterly fundraiser on Sunday afternoon, April 23. For details, see:

<http://saintanthonylodge.com/Documents/2017%20Event%20Flyers/QuarterRaffle%204-23-17.pdf>

Drug Take-Back Event

On Saturday, April 29, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. the Downingtown Police Department and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will give the public an opportunity to prevent pill abuse and theft by ridding their homes of potentially dangerous expired, unused, and unwanted prescription drugs. Bring your pills for disposal to the Downingtown Borough Hall Annex Building at 4 W. Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown. (The DEA cannot accept liquids or needles or sharps, only pills or patches.) The service is free and anonymous, no questions asked. For more information, call 610-269-0344, ext. 200 or email info@downingtowntown.org.

Lyme Disease

The Lyme Disease Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, an education and support group for patients and caregivers who have been affected by Lyme Disease, meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7PM at the Kennett Friends Meeting House on Route 82 (125 W. Sickel St. Kennett Square). Meetings are free and all are welcome. Check www.lymepa.org for directions and programs.

Plant Sale

The Garden Class of The Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan will hold its annual plant sale on Saturday, May 6, from 8 A.M. to 2 P.M. at the 1756 Uwchlan Meeting House, 5 North Village Avenue, Exton. Come early for the best selection of member-grown perennials, grasses, shrubs, and trees. Container gardens, gourd birdhouses, herbs, vegetables, annuals, and information on native gardening and pollinators are also offered. Proceeds from the sale benefit the 1756 Uwchlan Meeting House, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. For additional information, please call 610-363-9726.

Free Trout Rodeo

The Brandywine Trout and Conservation Club's Free Trout Rodeo, for kids 15 and younger, will be held from 9 AM until 2 PM on Saturday, April 25. Registration starts at 8 AM at the Kerr Park parking lot near the playground.

Surprising Martha Washington

The Mill at Anselma will kick off its 2017 speaker series with a fascinating talk about Martha Washington on Thursday evening, May 4. Nancy K. Loane, Ed.D., will present a surprising take on our first “First Lady” at Bell Hall, Montgomery School, 1141 Kimberton Road, Chester Springs. The event will begin at 6:30 PM with a wine & cheese reception, followed by Dr. Loane’s talk at 7 PM. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$5. Members of the Mill at Anselma attend free of charge.

How Stars Work

Fronefield Crawford III, PhD. professor of Astronomy, who teaches experimental methods of astrophysics at Franklin & Marshall College, will explain the basics of stars, physical mechanism by which they shine, their lives, etc. at the West Caln Historical Society’s meeting at 7 PM on Tuesday, May 16, in the West Caln Municipal Building, 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown. The meetings are free and open to the public.

Community Christmas Tree

In 2016, the Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Committee celebrated the start of the holiday season by purchasing a live Christmas tree, which was placed next to the Log House next to Kerr Park, where a well-attended tree lighting ceremony—with music, refreshments and Santa—was conducted. However, the Committee’s search for a large, live tree for Christmas 2017 has proved to be difficult and expensive. So, the Committee has decided to purchase a 17-foot-tall Giant Everest artificial tree, with a 3-foot-tall lighted star for the 2017 Community Christmas Tree, which will last for many years. To cover the cost of making that one-time purchase, the Committee has undertaken a fundraising effort. If you would like to help the Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas Committee buy this tree, please visit the website: www.dtownchristmas.com, where you’ll find all the information about sponsorship levels, or contact Dianne at 484-678-6835 for more information.

Kershey to speak on Aaron Burr

The Old Caln Historical Society will sponsor the program when Ross Kershey speaks about Aaron Burr - Hero or Villain? The program, which is free and open to the public, will be held at 2 PM on Sunday, April 23, at the Caln Township Municipal Building in Thorndale. Parking is available. Reservations not required. For information, call 610-384-8153.

Readers on the Run

The Readers on the Run races, to benefit the Downingtown Library, will be held on Saturday, April 22. Events include a 5K, 1.5-mile timed walk, and a kids’ dash. Registration at Green Street and East Pennsylvania Avenue, Downingtown, begins at 7 AM. Cash prizes of \$150, \$100 and \$50 will be awarded to the three top male and female runners in the 5K race. There also will be team competition. For more details, see: <https://www.runtheday.com/register/detail/readers-on-the-run>

East Brandywine Speakers

At 3:30 PM on Sunday, April 23, the East Brandywine Historical Commission will offer a program by Marion Piccolomini, local author and historian, on her book, “World War II and Chester County,” which describes how life changed for local residents, businesses and institutions during the World War II years. The program will be conducted at the township building, 1214 Horseshoe Pike in Guthriesville.

Oldies Night

Jerry Blavat, the Geator, will appear at the Oldies Night dance party, sponsored by the Downingtown Area Senior Center from 7-11 PM on Saturday, April 29 in the covered bridge room at the Kimberton Fire Co. on Route 113. Tickets, \$75 each, include food, beer and wine. With reserved seating, tickets must be pre-ordered by calling 610-269-3939.

Alert’s Golf Outing

The Alert Fire Co. will have its fourth annual golf outing on Monday, May 8 at the Downingtown Country Club. Entry fee is \$110 for each golfer includes: registration and lunch starting at 11:30 AM, shotgun start at 1 PM, greens fees, cart, beverages on the course, awards dinner, various prizes and door prizes Proceeds benefit Alert Fire Co. For more info, see: <http://alertgolfouting.org/>.

Nite at the Races

Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas committee will hold a Nite at the Races fundraiser at St. Anthony's Lodge, 259 Church Street, Downingtown, on Saturday, May 20. Doors open at 6 PM. Tickets are \$25 which includes food, beer & soda. Information about the event, how to buy tickets and horses can be found on the Christmas website at www.dtownchristmas.com or by calling Dianne at 484-678-6835. The Committee is hunting for raffle prizes and businesses to place ads in the event program. Deadline is May 10. Proceeds will go towards the 2017 Downingtown Good Neighbor Christmas event.

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, <http://josephspeople.org/our-chapters/downingtown/>, 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: cheryl.spaulding@josephspeople.org.