



## 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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## 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](mailto:Info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

## 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.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.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.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html).

# What was happening here 68 years ago

Noted below are items retrieved from local newspapers published in the early part of December 1949:

- Plans for **Downingtown's Christmas celebration** included a party for elementary school pupils in the Junior-Senior High School auditorium, sponsored by the Lions Club; and the arrival of Santa Claus (Warren Mercer wearing a recently purchased outfit) at a party at Kerr Park, where some 1,300 gifts were distributed to borough kids. And baskets of food, clothing and other gifts were given to 40 needy families.

- Officers elected to lead **St. Anthony's Lodge**, Downingtown, included: Benny Valocchi, president; Charles DiSante, vice president; Anthony DiBerardinis, treasurer; Anthony DiLuigi, Italian secretary; Frank Sack, English secretary; Anthony Viscichini, financial secretary; John Francella, auditor; Joseph Mento, assistant auditor; Armando Taraschi, censor. Councilors elected were Nello Caporale, Orlando Marino, Anthony Cozzone, Oscar DiBerardinis, Vincent DiLuigi, Edward Perley, Enio DiBerardinis, Louis D'Addezio, George Ciarlone, John Mascherino, Orlando Talucci and Lewis Capriotti.

- George Nixdorf, president, and Leland Wilson, vice president, were elected as officers of the **Downingtown School Board**. One of the issues discussed at the monthly board meeting was the limited seating at the DHS boys' basketball team's home games in the gym of the Junior-Senior High School (now the STEM Academy). Since the home games against league opponents were attracting an increasing number of DHS supporters, a decision was made to restrict the number of tickets sold to the number of seats in the gym.

- Nearly 200 boys came to **Messiah Lutheran Church**, Downingtown, to hear a talk by Chicago White Socks pitcher Randy Gumpert. Also at Messiah, the following officers were elected to the Church Council: Frank Knauer, president; James Steganius, secretary; and Walter Shaw, treasurer. And the Council saw plans for the construction of a larger Sunday School facility.

- In addition to a Christmas party, the annual meeting of the Friendship Circle of **Central Presbyterian Church**, Downingtown, included the election of these officers: Mrs. George Aumiller, president; Mrs. Robert Hadfield, vice president; Mrs. Corbin Mendenhall, secretary; Mrs. Robert Simmons, treasurer; Mrs. Warren Mitchell, auditor.

- The **Downingtown Young Men's Association** announced that the Community Basketball League would include teams sponsored by: the American Legion and VFW Posts, St. Anthony's Lodge, Downingtown Paper Co., and Downingtown Manufacturing Co., plus the East End Gunners.

- End Dan Hayes and fullback John Talierco were named the **outstanding lineman and back**, respectively, at the DHS football banquet. Also, DHS running back Jack Helm, was named Chester County's most outstanding football player by the Valley Forge chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

- The **Downingtown Lions Club** started raising money by placing gumball machines at local business establishments and clubs.

- Elected as officers of the Circuit Riders group at **Hopewell Methodist Church**, East Brandywine, were William Bixler, president; Alan McCausland, vice president; Mrs. Clifford Irons, secretary; and Allen Popjoy, treasurer.

- The Sunday School at **Marshallton Methodist Church** elected these officers: John Morris, superintendent; Earl Spellman, assistant superintendent; Mrs. David Johnson, second

assistant superintendent; Charles Busby, corresponding secretary; Mrs. Gordon Simmons, recording secretary; Evelyn Fling, treasurer; Mrs. George McAllister, temperance superintendent; Mrs. Austin Robinson, missionary chairman; Mrs. Maggie Mercer, home department; Mrs. Harold Robinson, music department; and Mrs. E.F. Henry, cradle roll.

- All the officers of the Mite Society at **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, were re-elected. They were Mrs. Frank Smedley, president; Mrs. Joseph Harvey, vice president; Mrs. Martha McAllister, financial secretary; Edna John, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Walter White, treasurer.

## It's the pool at Marsh Creek State Park



Tom Haas is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person who correctly identified the location of the swimming pool in the photo above as Marsh Creek State Park, 675 Park Road in Upper Uwchlan. For more info about the pool, see: [www.marshcreekpool.com/](http://www.marshcreekpool.com/).

## 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\\_De edAbstract.pdf](http://spesvox.org/prammer/EBHC/Researching_Historic_Properties_files/ResearchingGuide_De edAbstract.pdf).

## Group Photo of the Week



Featured speakers at the “Growing Up Italian-American in Downingtown” program, presented at St. Anthony’s Lodge on May 1, 2008, were: left to right, Jim Mascherino, Rose Castaldi and Ben Valocchi. The program was sponsored by the Downingtown Area Historical Society.

### **Have you registered for Part II of “Slices of Downingtown History” series?**

The second part of “Slices of Downingtown,” a series on local history, will be presented by the Downingtown Area Historical Society, in conjunction with the Downingtown Library, at 6:30 PM on Thursday, January 26 at the library.

The first “Slices” program, presented in October, focused on the early settlement of Downingtown in the 1700s, with an emphasis on the village’s early mills.

This new “Slices” program will move into the 1800s and will focus on the inns and early transportation and their impact on the village, including the turnpikes and the building of the first railroad.

Since seating for the January 26 program is limited. You can reserve a seat for the session, by registering online via the library’s website at:

<http://ereserve.ccls.org/evanced/lib/eventcalendar.asp?ag=&et=Adults%2C+Library+closings&n=0&private=0&ln=7>, by calling the Downingtown Library at 610-269-2741.

Vintage Ad of the Week



**All the World Loves**  
**ICE CREAM**

**And no wonder!**

**It is delicious, delightful, delectable, satisfying, cooling, healthful and tempting.**

**The Ice Cream we serve is of the very best—made of the purest ingredients—pleases your palate in every respect.**

**Sold in bulk or brick and served at our fountain.**

**You'll smack your lips when you try some!**

**Also soft drinks, sundaes, and confections.**

**Saturdays & Sundays Only, during the summer**  
**Brick Ice Cream—40c qt. 25c pt.**

**Sweetland Confectionery**

**121 E. Lancaster Ave.**

**Downingtown**

This ad was originally published in the June 13, 1930 edition of the *Downingtown Archive*.

## **Additional interesting news clips**

- The December 2, 1899 edition of the *Daily Local News* reported that the three-story girls' wing of the Soldiers' Orphans School at Chester Springs was nearly destroyed in a fire. Some portions of the lower floor and a few furnishings in the dining hall were saved by local farmers who raced to the scene. The farmers also took in many of the girls.
- Noted in the March 15, 1919 edition of the *Cleveland (OH) Gazette*: "The smallest penknife in the world is the handiwork of Dr. John Temple of Marshallton, PA." Also, according to the June 11, 1926 issue of the *Seattle (WA) Daily Times*: "Howard S. Kinsey of Downingtown, PA, claims to be the world's champion speller, and has offered to meet all competitors in that line." And the *Boy Scouts of America's 1927 annual report*, noted that members of Troop 1 in Downingtown, "attend to street-crossing traffic before and after school, as well as flag raising and lowering at schools daily,"

## **Free Ads for Non-Profit**

### ***History of Blacks and Lukens Steel Co.***

The National Iron & Steel Heritage Museum, 50 South First Ave., Coatesville, will present a program about "Coatesville Steel: The Black Experience" at 6 PM on Thursday, February 2. Cost: \$5 per person.

### ***Student Art at Library***

DHS East art students are displaying their work at the Downingtown Library, 122 Wallace Avenue.

### ***A Midwinter's Night: A dram good time!***

The Thorndale-Downingtown Rotary Club will have its eighth annual Whisky Tasting and dinner at the Marshallton 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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:cheryl.spaulding@josephspeople.org).