



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

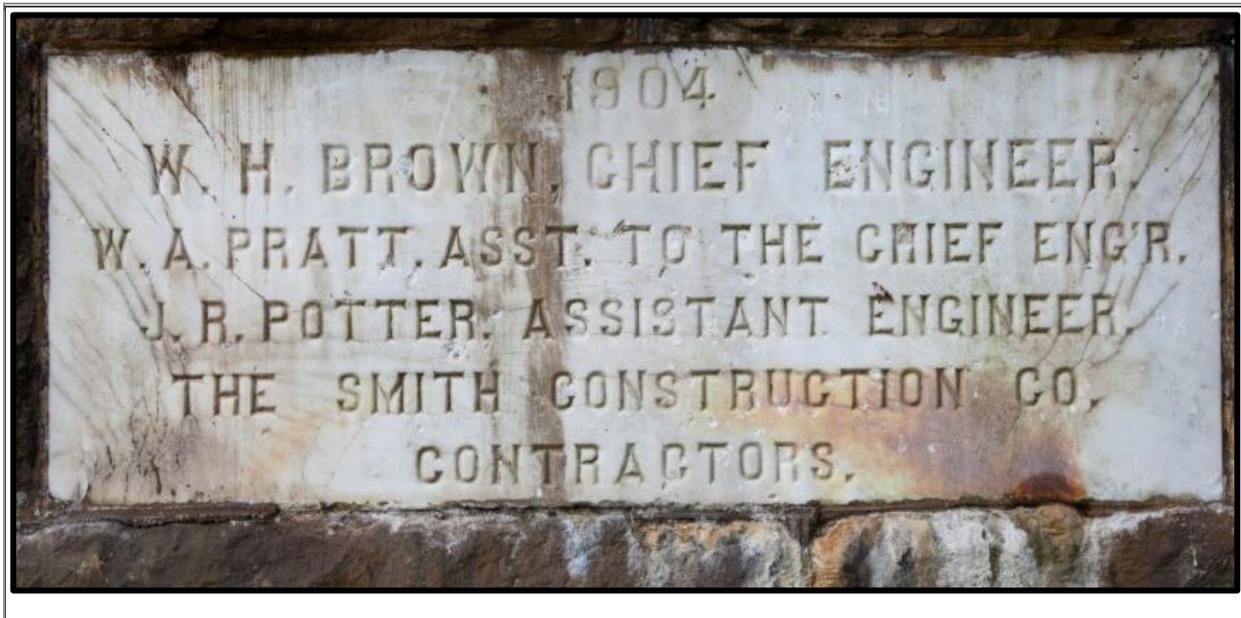
www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

The past is never done. It is not even past--William Faulkner

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What and 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.

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, 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.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org, access to: **Hist-O-Gram Archives**, which provides access to every Hist-O-Gram we have published since 2010.

It's the Chestnut Street Bridge



Ben Bruton is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person who correctly identified the site in the photo above as the 212-foot, two-lane Chestnut Street Bridge, which spans between Downingtown and East Caln. Originally built in 1927, the “structurally deficient” bridge is slated to be replaced with improvements in 2017.

And here's some interesting info on the bridge, provided by Jim Sundman, local railroad historian and vice president of the Downingtown Area Historical Society:

The tracks under the bridge were the scene of an 18-car freight train derailment in August 1936. During the clearing of the wreckage, one of the train cars caught fire. The fire spread to another car which was hauling naphthalene and was located very close to, or under, the Chestnut Street Bridge. As a result, the bridge caught fire and was severely damaged and had to be torn down. In fact, in the 1937 aerial photograph in our May 25 Hist-O-Gram, there was no bridge there. It stayed that way until 1939, when the Pennsylvania Railroad finished electrification of the line and a new bridge was built. It had to be built at the correct height for the catenary lines. So the bridge in the photo actually was built in 1939. And it's likely the bridge would have been replaced anyway, for the electrification project if it hadn't been damaged in the 1936 fire.

And when that fire occurred, another car carrying gun powder also caught fire. Two railroad workers became heroes after they coupled a locomotive to this car and brought it down the tracks to awaiting firemen who then put out the flames.

Also, Sundman has been producing a series of fantastic “Then and Now” photos which enable you to see an old shot of a local site morph into what that site looks like today. One of the recent additions to the series (#38) is an aerial map of the East Caln area in 1937, which was the “Where & What Is This?” photo in the May 25 edition of our Hist-O-Grams. That map photo morphs into what that area looked like in 2014, including the identification of roads and some well-known sites located there today. That photo, along with all the others, can be viewed on our Facebook page or you can see them on our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/channel/UCIh25kTu3B_uVb6lhZku7mw.

Downingtown area news published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* more than 100 years ago

May 25, 1893: Rev. A. G. Wilson, former pastor of First Baptist Church, Downingtown, was arrested for forgery in West Chester.

March 19, 1899: Officers of the newly formed Downingtown Athletic Association, were A. P. Ringwalt, president; Herbert Ash, secretary; and Howard Sides, treasurer.

November 12, 1902: Early plans for the Downingtown Opera House (later the Roosevelt Theatre on Brandywine Avenue) included stores on the first floor and a stage and theatre seating on the second floor.

February 14, 1905: The purpose for a meeting held at the Second Baptist Church in Philadelphia was to establish an industrial school for colored students in Pennsylvania, similar to the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, headed by Booker T. Washington. "A farm with excellent buildings" had been purchased in East Brandywine, where the Downingtown Industrial and Agricultural school was expected to be opened by April 1.

March 14, 1905: Four burglars were caught trying to steal goods in the wee hours of the morning from J. Hunter Woods' general store, at the intersection of East Lancaster and Uwchlan Avenues in Downingtown. Several neighbors, who were awakened by the culprits, surrounded the store and called for the thieves to surrender. One of the bandits was shot in the arm by Joseph Matthewson, a neighbor, when the four burglars tried to escape from the scene. All four received 10-year prison sentences.

August 21, 1907: The source of pollution of Brandywine Creek in the West Chester area was found to be a section of Downingtown, where 19 "water closets" and a large quantity of refuse from a dyeing mill were being emptied into the stream.

April 29, 1907: B. Reed Henderson, "a splendid, young catcher and a heavy hitter," signed to play for the Downingtown team in the Chester County Baseball League. The team played on the diamond at the former Kerr's Racetrack, at the intersection of Boot Road and Brandywine Avenue in Downingtown. Henderson, who had attended Indiantown School and Wallace Township High School in Glen Moore, eventually became principal of West Chester High School, and later was the school's namesake.

June 17, 1907: The paper company, owned by Charles Robinson at Dorlan's Mill in Uwchlan, was destroyed by fire.

April 21, 1908: Downingtown had a baseball team comprised of Italian players, who practiced every afternoon in a section of the borough later known as Johnstontown. The article also noted, "The colored boys also have a team and practice on the same ground."

November 11, 1908: Downingtown was one of the places in Chester and Delaware Counties, where local farmers could participate in the Pennsylvania Railroad's Educational Day, when the "Farmers' Special" trains stopped at small towns in Eastern Pennsylvania, and participating farmers had an opportunity to hear two lectures on agricultural topics, offered by college professors, in special passenger train cars.

May 8, 1910: The new school on West Lancaster Avenue, Downingtown, which initially was known as the Central School and taught students in grades 1 through 12, was dedicated. Since it cost \$58,000 to build the school and the borough had appropriated \$60,000 for the construction, the School Board turned \$2,000 back to the borough. In 1932, the building housed the West Ward Elementary School; it was razed in 1958.

Group Photo of the Week



Members of the 1923-24 DHS boys' basketball team, which won the Chester County championship that season, were, left to right: first row, Lewis Laird, George "Dink" Irwin (captain), Charles "Reds" Deets; second row, Carl Smith, Aaron McGowan, Russell Baldwin; third row, William Dague (manager), Joe Moran, Earl Drake, and Harvey Fishburn, coach. Irwin briefly played professional basketball in 1929, for the Cleveland team in the American Basketball League.

What locals were talking about 52 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in local papers in early February 1965:

- The Downingtown Area Joint School Board unanimously agreed to participate in the proposed **Chester County Vocational High School**, which also include students from West Chester, Coatesville schools and districts in the southern part of the county.
- Downingtown's Borough Council and the mayor "again figuratively skated around on the proposed **ice rink in Kerr Park**." Councilman Thomas Courtless, also president of the Lions Club, said the club would underwrite "most of the cost" of the proposed rink. However, after Mayor Creston Shoemaker continued to express concerns about safety issues, it was decided that the mayor should continue studying the feasibility of a park rink. Shoemaker also pushed for a new police car. "The one we have now is forever breaking down, leaking oil, and throwing gears. Fortunately, there hasn't been an emergency, so far, while the police car was up on the blocks."
- After reviewing plans to purchase 11.2 acres of land, near the church cemetery on Route 322, from Mr. and Mrs. James Manley, members of **East Brandywine Baptist Church** elected these leaders: Robert Gibson, Francis Summers, and Marvin Zynn, trustees; Raymond Fry, junior trustee; Edward Crane, William Mendenhall and Joan Siever, deacons; Dick Rutherford and John Crane, junior deacons; Miriam Beale and Virginia Faddis, Christian education board; Everett Henderson and Carrie Mendenhall, advisory council; Sara Trumbower, church school secretary; Florence McKeever, church clerk; Joyce Arters, treasurer; and Mabel Yoder, financial secretary.
- Lewis Pyle, of the Alert Fire Co., and John McAlpine, of the Minquas Fire Co., were named the Downingtown Fire Company's **Firemen of the Year**.
- Elected as officers of the Churchwomen of **St. James Episcopal Church**, Downingtown, were Mrs. Fred Seibert, president; Mrs. Guy Jordan, vice president; Mrs. Paul Pollock, treasurer; Mrs. Warren Radcliffe, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Thomas Lee, recording secretary.
- Officers elected by the congregation of **St. Paul's United Church of Christ** in Lionville were Harry Levering, elder; James McClung, deacon; Everett Wilson, trustee; and Mrs. Paul Evans, financial secretary.
- New members of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** were Mrs. Donald LaRose, Mrs. Richard Byerly, Mrs. Harold Sweigart, Mrs. Cary Pittman, Mrs. Robert Culers, Mrs. Joseph Piergiovanni and Mrs. George Patrylak.
- Mrs. Robert Norris, newly elected president of the Ladies Auxiliary of the **Minquas Fire Co.**, appointed these committee chairmen: Mrs. Pierce Pendergrast, hospitality; Mrs. Benjamin Summers, games and publicity; and Mrs. Edward Nichols, kitchen supplies.
- Elected as officers of **Fairview United Presbyterian Church**, Glen Moore, were elders Richard Clemmer, Kenneth Comstock and Edward Kalemjian, and trustees Harold Hannum, Charles Roulston, Howard Galt and William Wilson.
- Tom Price canned 27 points and Ken Sigle tallied 17, as the **DHS boys' basketball team** knocked Owen J. Roberts out of first place in the Ches-Mont League standings. Three days later, the Whippets forced Pottstown into overtime before succumbing to the Trojans 70-68. Len Collier led the Whippets with 19 points, and Roy Nellius and Sigle scored 16 and 13, respectively. And it took two overtimes until Downingtown edged Spring-Ford 56-55.
- **DHS varsity wrestlers**, who demonstrated techniques at a high school assembly, included Jay Rambo, Will Marion, Mark Stephenson, Ed Hildebeitel, Larry Smedley, Wilbur McQueen Jack Trego, Richard Myers, Joe Gara, Phil Stong, Rich McCabe and Jim Klunk.

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 and Jay Worrall. Carol Grigson is the archivist.

Vintage Ad of the Week

THOROUGHbred STALLION
AT STUD NEAR WEST CHESTER
DRUM MAJOR
Youngest and Perhaps Best Bred Son of
MAN O' WAR
Fee \$100 Live Foal or Money Refunded
Fee Payable When Mare Leaves Farm
Hunting Mares Acceptable

	Man o' War	{	Fair Play
			Hiahubah
DRUM MAJOR			
	Artifice	{	Light Brigade
			American Beauty

GLAD ACRES FARM
WHITFORD, PA. — PHONE EXTON 744-W
CLARENCE GALBREATH, Manager

This ad was originally published in the February 15, 1950 edition of the *Daily Local News*.

Free Ads for Non-Profits

East Brandywine Community Park Events

DNR, a Rock & Roll group from Delaware County, will play at a free concert at 6:30 PM on Friday, June 9. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy five guys who love playing the songs we heard on the FM airways: The Beatles, Bruce Springsteen, The Rolling Stones, Steely Dan, Elton John and more.

The Flatland Drive Bluegrass Band, which blends traditional hard-driving bluegrass with modern stylings will play at a concert at 6:30PM on Friday, July 14. This band has shared the stage with bluegrass giants such as The Seldom Scene, The Lonesome River Band, Dailey and Vincent and The Boxcars.

5K for Aidan Run/Walk

The 5K for Aidan Run/Walk for Heart Safe Communities will be held on Saturday, June 17 at Kerr Park and the Struble Trail in Downingtown. Registration ends June 15. For details see: www.5KforAidanJ.com

Community Festival

St. Joseph's Catholic Church's 10th annual Community Festival will be held June 20-24 at 332 Manor Ave., Downingtown. Festival hours are 6-10 PM Tuesday thru Thursday and 6-11 PM Friday and Saturday. Fireworks are Friday nite; rain date: Saturday nite. Wristbands for unlimited rides every nite are available for \$20 per person if purchased before June 19 or for \$25 each at the event. Live entertainment includes DeLaSalle String Band, Red Satins, D-Town School of Rock, 4 Play Band, and Bull Dogs. Bingo and Bake Sale every nite. Food service always available.

News about Senior Center programs & activities

You'll find information about the programs and activities at the Downingtown Area Senior Center in its monthly newsletter at: www.downingtownsensiors.org/programs/newsletter/

Whippets selling mattresses

The DHS West football is selling Lifestyle Adjustable Bed sleep systems in the Wagner Gym at DHS West from 10 AM until 5 PM on Saturday, June 10. You can save as much as 50% on new, brand-name mattresses. Funds raised on this project used for the team's equipment and transportation. For more details, see:

www.facebook.com/thomas.wickersham.31/posts/10209528884763035

Lindbergh Kidnapping

Historian and educator Ross Kershey will provide a talk about the kidnapping of the Lindberg baby at the 7 PM Tuesday, June 20 meeting of the West Caln Historical Society, at West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown. The meetings are free and open to the public.

Colonial Children's Day

The Mill at Anselma, on Rt. 401 (1730 Conestoga Road), ½ mile west of Rt. 113 in Chester Springs, will host an onsite **Colonial Children's Day** full of family fun and learning, from 10 AM to 4 PM on Saturday, June 10. In addition to tours of the Mill, children can enjoy the Penns Woods Puppet Theatre, Ice Cream Making, Colonial toys, Colonial Cheese Making and a blacksmithing demonstration.

The Mill will also provide grinding demonstrations throughout the day. Visitors will hear the rumble of the Colonial-era wooden gears, watch the power of the 16ft steel water wheel, and feel the corn meal as it pours out of the mill stones. The Mill, (ca. 1747) served its local agricultural community for nearly 300 years and is considered the most complete example of a Colonial-era custom grist mill in the United States.

Admission to the Mill at Anselma is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for children ages 4-14. Children under 4 are free. For more information, contact the Mill at Anselma at 610-827-1906, email info@anselmamill.org, or visit www.anselmamill.org. The Mill is open for tours Thursday through Sunday from 10 AM to 4 PM. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for children ages 4-14. Children under 4 are free.

Open Houses in Lionville

The Uwchlan Township Historical Commission will offer several open house events in the Lionville National Historic District on the first Sunday of the month, from April through November, at the John Cadwalader House and the Edith P. Moore School. Both are located on North Village Avenue and are staffed and open from 2 - 4 PM. The Cadwalader House is featuring a guessing game to identify post cards featuring special Pennsylvania sites. Prizes will be awarded for the most correctly identified photos. The Moore School is the original one room building where children can try on clothing replicas of the period and sit at historical desks. Authentic schoolbooks can be read and children can ring the school bell used to summon them not to be late. For more info, call 610-280-9522.

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 third Wednesday of every month at 7 PM at the Kennett Friends Meeting House on Route 82 (125 W. Sickle St. Kennett Square). Meetings are free and all are welcome. Check www.lymepa.org for directions and program information.

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/downingtwn/>, 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.