



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org

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

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What & Where Was 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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.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.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html.

What locals were talking about 53 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in local newspapers in the latter part of December 1964:

- **Jim “Chunky” Klunk** got a first-period pin in 48 seconds to give the DHS wrestling team a come-from-behind victory over Spring-Ford in the Whippets’ Ches-Mont League opener. Klunk’s teammates “just about carried him off the mat, although he weighs over 210 pounds,” claimed Coach John Bycoskie.

- Richard Wolfe was elected president of the **Glenmoore Fire Co.** Other officers elected were Lawrence Lutz, vice president; Thomas Trego, secretary; Harry Evans, financial secretary; and Lloyd Johnson, treasurer. Farney Forrester was elected trustee. John Trego and Edward Moore were incumbent trustees. Thomas Reber was re-elected fire chief, and James Burkey and Chester Ortlip were assistant chiefs. Officers of the fire company’s Ladies Auxiliary included Mrs. Edward Moore, president; Mrs. John Trego, vice president; Mrs. Wilmer Ferrell, secretary; and Mrs. Raymond MacDougal, treasurer.

- DHS students, who had been a member of the **marching band** for three years and received a white letter sweater at an assembly, included: Donald Ash, William Barlow, Cindy Bowe, Lee Ann Cohen, Edwin Connor, Barbara Curry, Dennis Dancy, Lynne Dowlin, Rojayne Ellis, Sharon Fennelly, Howard Fitzgerald, Ray Fry, William Hopson, Bonnie Ker, Linda Laird, Tom Marino, Gene Martin, Betty Mercer, Larry Nuse, Robert Pannebaker, Barry Piersol, Judy Ralston, James Sanders, Jeff Swisher, Jack Trego and Patricia Whitely.

- Airman 2/C **John McCombs**, of Downingtown, was one of the members of the 6989th Support Squadron at Misawa Air Base in Japan, who received a Community Relations Achievement Award for their work with the blind. They initiated and supported “Operation Eyesight,” which gained nationwide attention in Japan. Since they started sponsoring eye surgery for blind Japanese, their efforts resulted in restored sight for more than 30 Japanese citizens.

- Members of the new **Girl Scout Troop 1069**, sponsored by the Ladies of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Downingtown, included: Catherine March, Jane Mento, Kathleen Murray, Nancy Sheeler, Catherine Snyder, Elizabeth O’Tap, Susan Snyder, Cheryl Mitchell, Mary Fitzgerald, Donna Madrigale, Patricia Cardwell, Paula DeLiberato, Jeannie D’Attilio, Catherine Dolan, Susan Mento, Claire Paylor, Brenda Showalter, Diane Swarner, Nancy Massucci and Andrea Cook. Troop leaders were Mrs. Henry Cook, Mrs. George March and Mrs. William Snyder.

- Third, fourth and fifth graders, who participated in a Christmas program at **East Ward School**, included narrators Robert Taylor, Laurie Usher, Richard Thomas, Diane Hall, Jennie Powell, Sam Corliss and Walter Murray. Vocalists who sang solos were Michael Davis, Ricky Weist and Robyn Massimini. And a trio of trumpeters was comprised of Ted Fleck, David Burghart and Charles Hinkley also provided music.

- It took several months for these members of **St. Paul’s United Church of Christ**, Lionville, to put together the Christmas Story: Mrs. Harry Dewees, script; Mrs. Francis Shaeffer, costumes; Ms. Fred Geiger, Eleanor Robinson, Mrs. Darrell Lewis and Mrs. Harry Weaver, organ music; Robert Bergen, setting up properties; and Conrad Rodney, Mrs. Marple Lewis and Harry Dewees, photography.

- Members of the **Blue and Gold school newspaper staff** at DHS, who raised \$55 to put on a Christmas party for residents of the Tel Hai retirement home in Honey Brook,

included Pam Krigbaum, Ann Osborne, Connie Webster, Jeanne Dorsey, Cathy Mohler, Nancy Helms, Lois Quinn, Bill Shirley, Bill Behrnt, Russell Mattison, Jim Vail and Bob Ferguson.

- Momentarily, in the first five minutes of the opening quarter, **DHS boys' basketball** coach Mel Brodsky thought the Whippets had a shot at beating Coatesville. But that remote possibility of a major upset didn't last long, and the Raiders rolled to a 102-44 win. Oscar Asparagus and Ken Sigle sparked Downingtown's offense with 13 points each. The Whippets tallied its first Ches-Mont victory, by beating O.J. Roberts 66-50. The Whippets' well-balanced scoring was provided by Sigle (18 points), Tommy Price (17), and Roy Nellius (16).

- Members of the **DHS field hockey squad**, who received varsity letters at the fall sports assembly, were: Lynne Dowlin, Sharon Fennelly, Patricia Findley, Bonnie Ker, Robin Mattison, Sharon Michelfelder, Jo-Ellen Smith, Diane Wilkerson, Dorothy Zittle, Martha and Miriam Alexander, Mary Smith, Sandy Horsey and Carol Patrizio.

It's the Viaduct Avenue tunnel in Johnstown



Mark Myers was the first of many people who correctly identified the site in the photo above as the Viaduct Avenue tunnel under the PRR railroad bridge. It was built in 1873, to provide vehicular access to and from the Johnstown section of the borough.

What was happening here 86 years ago

Noted below are news items retrieved from January 1931 editions of the *Downingtown Archive*:

- The Downingtown School Board was looking at two potential locations for a **new Junior-Senior High School building**. The options under consideration were 10-12 acres owned by the Pollock family on Manor Avenue and two contiguous tracts at the northeast corner of Manor and Pennsylvania Avenues, owned by the Downingtown Woman's Club and Joseph Hoopes, respectively. Although the Woman's Club-Hoopes 4.5 acre site was smaller and comparatively more expensive than the Pollock tract, some residents believed those space issues could be overcome by having the students use the neighboring Kerr Park for recreation/athletic activities. Also, Woman's Club-Hoopes option would not necessitate the expense of extending the municipal sewer and water lines to the north end of the borough. However, the Pollock tract offered a better space for athletic fields as well as room for future growth.

- During the early days of the Great Depression, the **Downingtown Lions Club** welfare committee reported that it had recently provided 88 local families, with 153 orders of groceries and meats, including a weekly total of 250 quarts of milk. And 30 Christmas baskets—containing 4 pounds of sugar, 4 loaves of bread, 5 pounds of oatmeal, 2 cans of milk, 1 pound of coffee, 1 can of molasses, 1 can of cocoa, 1 bag of flour, and 2 pounds of beef—were delivered to needy families. Also, 1,250 Christmas toys were distributed to 220 kids. All of the items were donated by Downingtown area organizations, churches and individuals.

- Students at **West Ward School** finally had a cafeteria, in the basement of the neighboring **Messiah Lutheran Church** where a bowl of soup could be purchased. East Ward School's cafeteria had been opened in 1927. However, many of the students who lived in the borough still went home for lunch.

Missed any February issues?

In case you missed any February issues of our Hist-O-Gram, you can access them via:

February 2: <http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/February%202%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf>

February 9: <http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/February%209%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf>

February 16: <http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/February%2016%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf>

February 23: <http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/February%2023%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf>

Clip/Paste sessions slated for Sunday

We're looking for volunteers to participate in the Historical Society's clip/paste session, to be held from 1-4 PM on Sunday, March 5. The session, which involves clipping and pasting newspaper articles for our archival collection, will be held at Ashbridge House, our 308-year-old headquarters, next to the Chick-Fil-A restaurant in the Ashbridge Shopping Center on Route 30 in East Caln.

Group Photo of the Week



Pictured, left to right, in front of the Junior-Senior High School in the early 1950s were these students: front row, Louise Bartelmo DeMucci, Edie Forte Bartone and Laura Chandler Ericson; back row, Mary Jane Bird Augustin and Janet Kriebel Hesse.

Vintage Ad of the Week



GIFTS to PLEASE the BRIDE

Electric Waffle Irons, Toasters,
Percolators and Sweepers

Chinaware, Glassware, Pewter-ware,
Casseroles, Carvers, etc.

Electric Stoves - Fans - Washing machines
Window Screens - Tontine Shades

**General Electric
Refrigerators**

Milk Cans - Bottles - Caps - Strainer Pads

FARM MACHINERY

Garden and Truck Sprays

TENNIS PLAYERS !

Get Our Prices on Bancroft, Spalding and
Ken-Wel Rackets

TENNIS BALLS at EXTREMELY LOW PRICES



Fishing Tackle

**Golf and Base Ball
Equipment**

**Theo. M. Griffith and Son
Downingtown, Penna.**

This ad was first published in the May 30, 1930 edition of the *Downingtown Archive*.

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.

Free Ads for Non-Profit

Lessons Learned

Del Staecker, author of two award-winning WW II memoirs, will speak about “Lessons Learned from the Greatest Generation” at the West Caln Historical Society’s meeting at 7 PM on Tuesday, March 21. He’ll share his insights from WW II stories, and his thoughts about heroes and the personal cost of war - and why their stories matter now. The meeting, which will be held at the West Caln Municipal Bldg., 721 W. Kings Hwy., Wagontown, is free and all are welcome.

Workshop for prospective DAR members

Women, ages 18 and older, are encouraged to attend the “Prospective Member Workshop,” conducted by the Chester County Chapter of the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, to be held from 10 AM until noon on Saturday, March 18 in the atrium of the Henrietta Hankin Library, 215 Windgate Dr. Chester Springs. The library is located near the intersection of Routes 100 and 401, by Ludwigs Corner in West Vincent Township. It is about 4 miles from Exit 312 of the PA Turnpike.

E. Brandywine’s speaker series

Local author and historian Bruce Mowday will make a presentation on “The Brandywine—America’s River” at 3:30 PM Sunday, March 19 to kick off the East Brandywine Historical Commission’s spring speaker series. 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 12 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.

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.