



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 & 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.

What locals were talking about 52 years ago

Noted below are items first published in local newspaper in the early part of January 1965:

- Downingtown became first Chester County municipality to award an **exclusive cable TV system franchise** when Borough Council selected Triangle Publications, parent of TV station WFIL. Triangle claimed the cable system would cost homeowners “about \$8 a month.” Council also approved the construction of an **ice skating rink in Kerr Park**. The Downingtown Lions Club had been promoting the project, and agreed to cover some of the costs. Several borough officials and Lions Club members had recently journeyed to Quakertown to inspect a similar rink, with a clay base that precluded water seeping into the ground.

- Carl Garrison, superintendent of elementary schools in the Downingtown District, presented a plan to reshuffle several hundred students among four schools. Overcrowding at Beaver Creek and Marshallton Schools, plus a soon-to-be completed addition at Lionville School, were the reasons for changing boundaries to more evenly balance pupil assignments among four schools for the 1965-66 school year. The plan hit a snag when the issue of continuing to **lease space at the Alert Fire Co. in Downingtown and the West Bradford Fire Co. in Marshallton** to alleviate some of the overcrowding was discussed. The school directors agreed to review the plan at the February board meeting

- Charles Mentzer was elected chairman of **East Brandywine Township’s** board of supervisors, and Roy Nellius was elected vice chairman. Mrs. John Frazer was the board secretary, and Alan McCausland was the township roadmaster.

- **G. Roland Moore** was named Citizen of the Year at the Downingtown Chamber of Commerce’s 20th annual dinner-dance. Moore had recently sold his office supply business.

- New members of **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Mr. and Mrs. Richard Byerly, Mr. and Mrs. William Haering, James Harman, Walter Millard, Irvin Rubincam, Mrs. David Tracey, and Mr. and Mrs. Richard Troyer.

- DHS classmates were shocked when they learned that **Robert Carl**, a senior from Uwchlan, had died after sustaining severe head and other injuries in a car accident on Route 100, near Eagle. Carl was captain of the high school’s football and wrestling teams. Also injured in the crash were James Dewees, 13, and his brother, Jacob, 16, both of Uwchlan.

- Mrs. James Andrien, president of the **West Bradford Fire Company’s Ladies Auxiliary**, made these appointments: Mrs. William Keeler, chaplain; Mrs. John Miller, sunshine chairman; Mrs. Josephine Simmons and Mrs. Edwin Hill, house committee; Mrs. Hestor Wallace, kitchen committee; Mrs. John Trimble, Helen Crawford and Mrs. Mary Lou Elliott, membership; Mrs. Jack Sellers, lending committee; Mrs. Ernest Fling, fair committee chairman; and Mrs. Robert Crawford, way and means committee.

- Installed as faculty members for the Sunday School of **St. Paul’s Lutheran Church**, Lionville, were Mrs. Frederick Walker, Dolly Butterman, Janice Windle, Mrs. Elroy Butterman, Nancy Martin, Mrs. William Davies, Mrs. Alfred Kochel, Mrs. Frederick Dahlberg and Mrs. Robert Poole.

- After the **DHS basketball squad** suffered its third loss in early January, a 78-46 thrashing by Phoenixville, Coach Mel Brodsky said, “Some of the players were disinterested in playing ball tonight. And I’m going to be disinterested in playing them Friday or afterwards, until they look like they want to play ball.” However, Brodsky noted that Whippet guard Ken Sigle had done “a good job setting up the offense, had several assists, and scored well.”

Group Photo of the Week



This photo of a basketball team was taken in 1896, and we know the team had a Downingtown connection. But since most of them were in their early twenties, it was not a DHS team. Also note that their uniforms looked more like football gear than basketball togs. The players and adults connected with the team were, in no particular order: William Broschard, George Perry, Ira Ingram, Afton Wilkinson, Will Miller, Leach Holliday, E. Broschard, William Ash, Herbert Ash, William Shoad, M. Thomas, Bill Bochastin, Harry Hutchison, Bob McCaughey, Bob Ash and Walter Smith.

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

What was happening here 86 years ago

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

- Borough Council and the Park Commission agreed to lease land in Kerr Park to the **Downingtown Swimming Pool Association**, so a swimming pool, plus bath houses and showers, could be built there. The \$15,000 project was to be financed by establishing a holding company, which would sell 15-year debenture bonds. About 30 % of the bonds issued were pledged within days of project's approval.
- The Downingtown School Board decided that the **new junior-senior high school** should be built on some 12 acres that were part of the W. Irwin Pollock farm property, which fronts on Manor Avenue, near Race Street. Two other sites considered by the school directors were the Woman's Club property on Manor Avenue and the land where the East Ward School was located on East Lancaster Avenue. Although the Pollock farm property option provided space for athletic fields, that location would be costly because the municipal water and sewer lines, plus sidewalks, would have to be extended for several blocks in a rural section part of the borough.
- Despite the enthusiastic support for a pool, the **Alert Fire Co.** decided not to have its annual carnival in the coming summer because many borough residents were experiencing "hard times" due to the Great Depression.
- The Field Club represented Downingtown in a new **Chester County Baseball League**, which was formed at a meeting at the Swan Hotel in the borough. The Field Club's leaders were Howard Harvey, manager; Joseph Terramin, coach; Anthony Mento, president; Daniel Kennedy, vice president; Edward Fahey, treasurer; and Andrew Mento, secretary. Other communities that had teams in the league were Coatesville, Modena, Thorndale, West Grove, Kennett Square, Longwood and Doe Run.
- And the **Downingtown Twilight League**, comprised of four borough teams, also was established in 1931, according to Raymond Greenleaf, league director. The teams and their managers were: Alert Fire Co., Lewis Moses; Downingtown News, Ross Dague; Downingtown Athletic Association, Percy Miller; and Greenleaf's Pharmacy, Raymond Greenleaf.
- Merle Brown, DHS biology teacher, had a group of his high school students spray oil on local streams, to **alleviate mosquito problems**.
- Musicians in the **Glen Moore Fretted Instrument Band** were Charles, Norman and Granville McCardell; Gilbert and Violet Hock; Flossie Parrott; Ethel Harple; Winfield and Edward Ford; Alice Dunlap; Mabel Hellinger; W. E. Corson; and Bill Benner.
- The **trout pond** in Kerr Park, stocked with over 100 brook trout, ranging in length from 8 to 12 inches, was dedicated. The pond, built by John Englerth, was christened by Lucy Lloyd, whose father, William Lloyd, spearheaded the pond project.
- The **DHS orchestra**, directed by Ruth Shumway, won the Chester County Orchestra Competition, which involved musical groups from 11 high schools.
- Sixth grade boys at **East Ward School**, who built bird houses, included George Haberle, Elmer Jameson, Raymond Hadley, Richard Clarke, Grant LeFevre and Frank Moore.

Vintage Ad of the Week

B. JUGLIELMO
Expert Shoe Repairing
Has Moved from Center
Square to
315 Washington Avenue
and is ready and equipped to
serve you now as before

All Work Guaranteed **Prices Reasonable**

This ad was originally published in the May 8, 1931 edition of the *Downingtown Archive*.

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, April 2, and from 6:30-8 PM on Tuesday, April 4. The sessions, 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.

Obituary:

Roger Grigson spearheaded restoration of Ashbridge House

D. Roger Grigson, 83, of Downingtown passed away on Thursday, March 23, 2017, at Chester Valley Rehab. He was the husband of Carol Grigson with whom he shared 32 years of marriage.

Born in Bryn Mawr in 1933, Roger was the son of the late William Herbert and Gretchen Schweitzer Grigson.

He was a 1951 graduate of West Chester High School and attended Cornell University.

Roger served in the U. S. Marine Corps and was stationed on a troop ship off the coast of Guatemala for five months. As a veteran, he was a member of the American Legion Post 134 in West Chester, where he had served a term as Commander. He was also a life member of the Marine Corps League.

After returning to civilian life, he entered the insurance field; first as an agent and later as the owner of a property/casualty agency. Roger ran the company with his wife, Carol, until 2012.

For many years, Roger was a part of the family Christmas tree business, which was founded in 1950. When it was started, it was the first 'choose-and-cut' tree farm in Chester County. After his father's death, Roger ran the tree farm until 2000.

He was always active in community affairs. Growing up as a Boy Scout, he became a leader in 1960 of Troop 55, sponsored by Grove United Methodist Church and later established Troop 134, sponsored by the American Legion in West Chester.

After marrying his wife, Carol, they became involved with Project Children - a program bringing children from troubles in Northern Ireland to America - to witness tolerance and understanding. He served as coordinator for Project Children for many years, which was sponsored by First Presbyterian Church in West Chester.

Because of his love for military history, Roger started the World War II census for Chester County. Working with the Chester County Historical Society, Roger and his committee were able to conduct hundreds of interviews, along with statistical information, of Chester County residents who served during World War II. Over 13,000 names are now part of the census.

His later years were consumed with his passion for the Downingtown Area Historical Society, finding a place for its headquarters, and negotiating to preserve the 1709 stone house, now known as the Ashbridge House. Rescued from the wrecking ball, the Society inherited a building in great despair. Roger led the drive to restore the building so that it could be used to preserve and share the history of the Downingtown area.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Grigson is survived by his children, Geoff Grigson, Gregory Grigson and Melissa Grigson; three grandchildren and two great grandchildren. He was also predeceased by his brother, William H. Grigson, Jr.

A celebration of Roger's life will be held at 10 AM on Saturday, April 22 at the James J. Terry Funeral Home, 736 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, where friends and family may visit from 9 AM until the time of a service.

Interment will be private at the request of the family.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in Roger's name may be made to the Downingtown Area Historical Society, P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335.

It's the "Norseman" sailing on the lake at Marsh State Park



Ellen Van Lew is a truly perceptive scholar because she was the first person who correctly identified the scene in the photo above as the lake at Marsh Creek State Park in Upper Uwchlan, where the "Norseman," a 40-foot Viking ship replica, is launched annually in October by members of Leif Ericson Viking Ship Inc. (LEVS) a nonprofit Chester County-based organization. The group's goal is to educate people about Leif Ericson and the Viking people as merchants, navigators, shipbuilders and more, as well as to re-create the experience of traveling on water as the Vikings did 1,000 years ago.

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.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org, and typing your email address into the **sign-up box** on the home page. We won't share or sell any email addresses.

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

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.

And if you missed the March 23 Hist-O-Gram, you can access it by clicking on:

www.downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/March%202023%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf

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

Mulch Sale

Members of the DHS football team are selling mulch, and they are willing to come to your home to spread the mulch you purchase. The mulch is provided by Sweetwater100 Inc., which deliver it to your home. The cost is \$28 per yard of mulch. For more details call: Karen Laughman, 484-574-9728, or Tim Glennon, 484-999-7590.

Muzzy Run

The 11th annual Muzzy Run on the Struble Trail will be held on Saturday, April 8. It will include a 5K, a 1-mile fun walk, and a kids' fun run. Registration online ends on April 7. For details, see:

<https://runsignup.com/Race/PA/Downingtown/MuzzyRun>

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.

Craft/Antique/Flea Market & Ross Kershey

Table space is available for craft/antique/flea market to be held from 9 AM until 2 PM on Saturday, May 13 on the grounds of the Caln Township Municipal Building, Municipal Drive, Thorndale. Sponsored by the Old Caln Historical Society; call Joan 610-384-9496 or Lois 610-384-8153 for information. The Old Caln Historical Society also 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. Also at the Caln Township Municipal Building. Parking is available. Reservations not required. For information, call 610-384-8153.

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 shed in the Kerr Park parking lot near the playground.

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>

Senior Resource Fair

A free Senior Resource Fair will be held from 9 AM until 3 PM on Tuesday, April 4 at the Downingtown Area Senior Center, 983 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown. The fair will include more than 20 local businesses and organizations, including travel planners, continuing education reps, and health and wellness resources.

Mill at Anselma's opening weekend

As the oldest known grist mill in America still operating with its original machinery, The Mill at Anselma is a unique experience for history buffs, engineers, and families interested in how the evolution of technology impacted life here in Chester County over three centuries. The Mill at Anselma, at 1730 Conestoga Road in Chester Springs, opens for its 2017 season on Saturday, April 1. Hours are 10 AM-4 PM, Saturday and Sunday. Admission \$3-\$5, depending on age. See www.anselmamill.org for more information.

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/>.

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.