



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

*Interesting local history, accessed from our archives*

[www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](http://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](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalociety.org/Histograms.html).

# What was happening here 68 years ago

Noted below are items originally published by local newspapers in late December 1949:

- Downingtown organizations made major efforts to make Christmas a wonderful holiday for kids and needy families. Accompanied by the DHS marching band, Santa Claus (Warren Mercer) paraded over the borough's principal streets to the Log House at Kerr Park, where he gave a toy and candy to more than 1,000 children. The program, sponsored by the **Downingtown Christmas Committee**, was chaired by Huston Mattson. The committee also distributed clothing and toys to some 150 youngsters from needy families. They were delivered in trucks provided by Herman Faucett, Mylin Plank, Louis D'Addezio, James Hilton, Walter Hadfield, Lewis and Stanley Sarmiento, Edgar Griffith and Aubrey Goudie. Also, the Downingtown Lions Club put on a Christmas party in the auditorium of the junior-senior high school for some 800 elementary students from the borough, Marshallton and Guthriesville.
- Elected as officers of the **Downingtown Young Men's Association** were: Allen Hughes, president; Gerald Lyons, vice president; Floyd Lilley, recording secretary; Charles Forte, corresponding secretary; and Morris Stevens, treasurer.
- Members of the **Williamson Masonic Lodge** in Downingtown elected the following officers: Charles Ezrah, master; George Aumiller, senior warden; Robert Hadfield, junior warden; Palmer Raysor, secretary; Leland Wilson, treasurer; and John Fisher, Edwin Baldwin, Arthur Glauner, trustees.
- **Lionville Primary School** students who provided Christmas entertainment for parents and friends included Jimmy Rennard, Albert Miller, Roger Tracy, Donna Fay Matlack, Jean Dowlin, Janice Windle, Norman Jenkins, Jane Miller, Jackie Stine, Raymond Whitely, Janice Tryon, Eddie Pringle, Marie Abel, Judith Jones, Joseph McClure, Nancy Shreiner, Walter Supplee, Sandra Meredith and Eddie Matthews.
- Jack Helm's 20 points spearheaded the **DHS basketball team's** offense, as the Whippets won their season opener by beating Parkesburg 64-32. Sonny Milano and Pete Hayes contributed to the effort by scoring 11 points each.
- Elected as officers of the Alpha Bible Class at **First Baptist Church**, Downingtown, were Mrs. Robert Laird, president; Anna Hall, vice president; Mrs. Frank Smedley, secretary; and Mrs. Walter Fisher, treasurer.
- Members of **Marshallton's Cub Pack** who earned badges included Jackie Tinder, Harry Cann, Charles Bossert, Curtis and Eugene Eaby, Donald Lambert, Ralph Hall and Charles Brooks.
- Those who performed in a Christmas play at **Fairview Presbyterian Church**, Glen Moore, included George McConaghy, Jane McLaughlin, Bill and David Harrop, Mrs. Charles Earnshaw and Mildred Davis.
- **DHS students** who had featured roles in the production of "Don't Open Until Christmas" were Joan Lenhardt, Frank DiPietro, Eleanor Detterline, Ann Hutchison, Leo Ciarlone, Arlene Harkins and Joseph Young.
- Members of the **Alert Fire Co.** elected these officers: Gordon Carpenter, president; George Nixdorf, vice president; Elmer Schrupf, recording secretary; Arthur Glauner, financial secretary; Leland Wilson, treasurer; Lloyd Mason, trustee; Charles Broomall, assistant chief; W. H. Backenstose, captain; Fred Jamison, first lieutenant; and Earl Stern, second lieutenant. Also, the final payment was made on the new cement block building constructed in the rear of the Alert's property on West Pennsylvania Avenue.

## It was the Ladies Auxiliary of the Alert Fire Co. in a parade



Jeff Stevens, the Alert Fire Co. historian, as well as assistant chief, was the only person who correctly identified the scene in the photo above as the Alert's Ladies Auxiliary in a parade. Larry Meredith, who provided the photo, says it was taken in 1948, and that his grandmother, Esther Wilson Brown, is pictured in the front row. It appears that the parade photo was not taken in the borough since there was no brickwork surfaces on any of Downingtown's thoroughfares at that time, and no one can recall a Pure Oil gas station in town back then. The auxiliary marched in parades with the Alert firefighters and vehicles back in the day, according to Stevens. And the uniforms the auxiliary members were wearing in the photo were comprised of a white skirt/blouse or dress, which also were the uniform they also wore while serving at banquets, held on the second floor of the firehouse on West Pennsylvania Avenue. The capes they wore in the parade were navy blue on one side and red on the other side. Auxiliary officers wore the red side out and all of the other members wore the navy side out. The fire company has some of those capes and the parade banner, shown in the lower right of the photo, in its archives. Although fire companies marching in parades started in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century, says Stevens, the Alerts didn't hitch-up the horses and drive the old steamer to a parade. Instead, the fire company's meeting minutes show that the Alerts booked two or three Pennsylvania Railroad cars to take the volunteers to march in parades in Lancaster, York, Harrisburg and Reading in the late 1890's and early 1900's.

*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 locals were talking about 57 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in the *Downingtown Archive* on June 9, 1960:

- Raymond Baugher, superintendent of schools, predicted that “a major portion” of the **\$2.6 million high school** under construction would be completed in time for senior high students to attend classes in the new facility in September.
- **Faculty awards** presented to graduating seniors at the high school’s final assembly were: Thomas Booker, English; Edward Matthews, social studies; Michael Echols, mathematics; Paul Edelen, science and music; Linda Hadfield, commercial; Jeanne Keehn, art; Lamar Howe, agriculture; Roy D’Ginto, industrial arts; and Eleanor Robinson, home economics.
- Parents of graduating DHS seniors sponsored an **all-night party** at St. Anthony’s Lodge, following commencement exercises.
- Ground was broken for **Beaver Creek Elementary School**, to be built on part of the Lloyd Farm property at West Pennsylvania and Lloyd Avenues in the borough. Students who participated in the ceremonies were Charles Menas, Betsy Robbins, Eric Dreibelbis, Debbie Beam, Tommy Connors, Ann Osborne and Leonard Collier.
- Directors for **summer recreation programs**, conducted by the Downingtown-West Bradford Elementary School Board, were Eileen McCardell and Jeanne Emery, East Ward School; Mary Jean Lillard, Alert Fire Co.; Laura Ericson, Lionville School; and Edward Novak, Marshallton School.
- Elected as officers of the **Pickering Valley Women’s Club** were Mrs. Charles Stanford, president; Mrs. Norman Frank, vice president; Mrs. Jacob Dewees, secretary; and Mrs. Paul McCardell, treasurer.
- Members of Intermediate **Girl Scout Troop 180**, Downingtown, who went on a nature hike and had a cook-out, included Linda Boyd, Linda Wilson, Ruth Keller, Carol Reutter, Mary Ann Brookover, Linda Broomall, Yvonne Bertram, Judy Williams, Ruth Jean Bicking, Carol Miller and Virginia McElyea.
- Installed as officers of the **Ladies of St. Joseph’s Catholic Church** were Mrs. John Falini, president; Mrs. Nello Caporale, vice president; Mrs. Calvin Mingione, recording secretary; Mrs. Robert Cozzone, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Mario Pizzi, treasurer.
- Frances Knight was crowned Queen of the **Wallace Township School District’s** spring fete. Her attendants were Nancy Edwards and Christine Harrison. Court attendants were Ronald Saathoff, Gene Dowlin, Lloyd Lutz and Russel Slater.
- Students, who performed at the **East Brandywine Music Festival**, held at Guthriesville School, included Debbie Whiteman, Jane Neff, Jonathan Inslee, Janie Fraser, Bindy Von Hacht, Kathy Irons, Jerry Feiler, Louise Herring, John Pollock, Douglas Gindin, Donald Campbell and John McGirk.
- Chosen to be members of the **DHS marching band’s color guard** were Frances Fitzgerald, Mia Kangas, Eileen Moyer, Barbara Noll, Jeanne Watts, Rosemary Krzysko and Bonnie Plank.

Vintage Ad of the Week

# **GALA NEW YEAR'S DINNER PARTY**

**THURSDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 31, 1964**



**GENEROUS FULL COURSE ROAST PRIME RIBS OF BEEF DINNER with Everything from Soup to Nuts. Served Regally in the Lower Grand Ballroom . . . New Year's Hats, Horns, Novelties, Noisemakers Included FREE.**

**DINNER WILL BE SERVED from 9:00 to 11:30  
and Great DANCING and ENTERTAINMENT from 9:45 to 2 a.m.**

## **EVERYONE WELCOME!**

**RESERVE NOW, DON'T BE DISAPPOINTED AFTER  
OUR LIMITED QUOTA IS ALL SOLD, ACT NOW!!  
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT MAIN DESK IN LOBBY!**

**\$7.50 PER PERSON  
DOWNTOWN MOTOR INN**

This ad was originally published in the December 21, 1964 edition of the *Daily Local News*.

## In case you couldn't access a Hist-O-Gram

You can access last week's (March 2 edition) Hist-O-Gram by clicking on: [www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/March%202%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms/2017%20Hist-O-Grams/March%202%202017%20Hist-O-Gram.pdf).

Also, you can use a bookmark, which is a list of favorite websites that provide a handy way to access the most recent Hist-O-Gram. By clicking on our bookmarked website—[www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org)—you will gain access to our website's home page, where the latest Hist-O-Gram always will be on the left side.

Another bookmark option is: [www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Histograms.html), which provides immediate access, in sequential order, to every Hist-O-Gram we have published since 2010.

## Repointing of Ashbridge House stone walls is almost completed



If you drove by Ashbridge House, our 308-year-old headquarters on Route 30 in East Caln, in recent weeks, you probably noticed that the exterior stone walls are being repointed. That means that all of the old mortar was removed and is being replaced. The project was initiated two years ago, when the wall on the east side of the house was repointed. Now the other three sides are being done. That was made possible through a wonderful donation by a local organization. The project has been handled by Paul Steiner's firm, of Kennett Square, which specializes in doing masonry work on historic buildings. You can check out the history of Ashbridge House via: [www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Ashbridge%20House%20History.html](http://www.downingtowntareahistoricalsociety.org/Ashbridge%20House%20History.html).

## Group Photo of the Week



The DHS Alumni Association's fifth annual Homecoming was held on October 14, 1967. That year's Homecoming court included, left right: front row, Denise Asparagus, Lauren Tweed, Lyn Jaeschke and Susan Seel; back row, Rhonda Hugill, Susan Myers, Rose DiOttavio, Homecoming Queen Donna Usher, Susan Richards, Joan Poffenbarger and Alexis Mecray.

## 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/](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).