



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

Vol. 8, No. 21

May 25, 2017

What and Where Is This?



Yes, this one is a toughie. But thousands of you drive on the thin, white line that runs horizontally across the aerial photo above, which was taken on September 20, 1937. What we're looking for is the identity of what now occupies much of the farmland show in the photo. The first person to correctly answer that question will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your response to: dahs19335@gmail.com.

What locals were talking about 67 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in local newspapers in the latter part of February 1950:

- The Ladies Auxiliary donated \$365 to the **Alert Fire Co.**, to be used to buy inhalator/resuscitator equipment for firefighters. The auxiliary's committee chairmen included Ella Lammey, chaplain; Mrs. Benjamin Summers, pianist; Mrs. Fred Jamison and Mrs. Bessie Osborne, property; Mrs. Paul Dowlin, flowers and cards for the ill; Mrs. Frank Pendergast, Mrs. Edna Pendergast, Mrs. A. J. Brookover, Mrs. Francis brown, Mrs. Hazel Wills, and Mrs. Elizabeth Whiteman, entertainment; Mrs. Carrie Gregory, Mrs. Audrey Thompson, Mrs. Dorothy Robinson and Mrs. James Stauffer, membership.
- DHS students who made the **District Chorus** were Patricia Patterson, Eleanor Detterline, Ronald Hogg, John Shisler, Ronald Piersol, James Zaferes and Leo Ciarlone.
- A proposal to construct a new lodge by members of **St. Anthony's Lodge** was turned over the building committee, chaired by Oscar DiBerardinis.
- Pupils of Mrs. Mary Eppheimer at **Indiantown School** in Wallace Township, who made the honor roll, were: seventh graders Betty Lou Henderson and Barbara Ford; sixth graders Donald Ray, Frank Aaron and Kathryn DeHaven; and fifth grader Ruth Parrott.
- Cub mothers and assistants, who directed some 60 **Downingtown Cub Scouts** in sketches on Lincoln and Washington, included Mrs. Charles Ax, Mrs. Robert Plank, Mrs. Peter Short, Mrs. Ralph Kinzey, Mrs. Allen Hughes, Mrs. D. Carver, Mrs. Robert Simmons, Mrs. David Ross, Mrs. John Bray, Mrs. George Nixdorf, Mrs. Andrew Romenet, Mrs. John Swarner, Mrs. William McNamara and Mrs. Clair Langham.
- Senior **Girl Scout Troop 2**, Downingtown, was making plans for its second annual fashion show for teenagers. Dorothea Snyder was general chairman; Jane Romig was in charge of decorations; and Nancy Brookover was responsible for tickets. Troop leaders were Mrs. Nathan Eachus and Mrs. John Forbes.
- Attendance at the **DHS Alumni Association's** annual dinner was limited to 400, the capacity of the Alert Fire Company's banquet hall. Officers of the association were Calvin Ax, president; Wilson Pollock, vice president; Mary Jane Pawling, recording secretary; and Emily Lewis, treasurer.
- **Mr. and Mrs. Ross Hershey** of Upper Uwchlan won the "Second Honeymoon" competition on a New York City radio program. Besides an all-expense-paid stay at the Bear Mountain, NY, resort for three days, the prizes included three pairs of nylon stockings, a purse, a cake, a dress, a facial and a hair-do and three portrait photos.

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.

When Lincoln's train stopped in Downingtown

Here's a verbatim account of a story, written in late February 1861 by a seemingly star-struck reporter for the *West Chester Record*, about a train stopping in Downingtown, as it transported Lincoln from Springfield, IL, to Washington for his inauguration in March of 1861:

At Downingtown, where the train stopped for wood and water, the crowd was dense. The instant the cars came to a halt, the rear platform of the rear car was besieged by a mob of Downingtowners, who called for the President-elect. He declined to respond until just as the train was about to start, when he appeared for a moment on the rear platform and was greeted with immense cheering.

The train stopping for wood and water sounds odd to a "youth of the present day, when coal is burned on locomotives which scoop up water from troughs between the rails as they rush along. But one can easily remember the large woodshed that stood on the south side of the track, across from (Eichholtz's) now Boldridge's Hotel (later the Pennsylvania House), and he can recall seeing the men throwing up the wood, a piece at a time, to the fireman, who piled it on his tank so that it wouldn't fall off.

Imagine, will you, the New York and Chicago Limited stopping at Downingtown for wood and water! This fact of Mr. Lincoln's train stopping at Downingtown for such a purpose is only a striking instance of how things and the times have changed.

Brief, but important

- Remember the little boy pictured in a photo in recent editions of the Hist-O-Gram, which were connected with the Guernsey Cow Sign on Route 30 in Exton? We mistakenly said that boy was Ed Pusey, which was wrong. His name is Ed Lacey, who also provided the photo. We apologize.
- The Historical Society's headquarters, Ashbridge House, will be closed on Sunday, May 28, since it's part of the Memorial Day weekend.

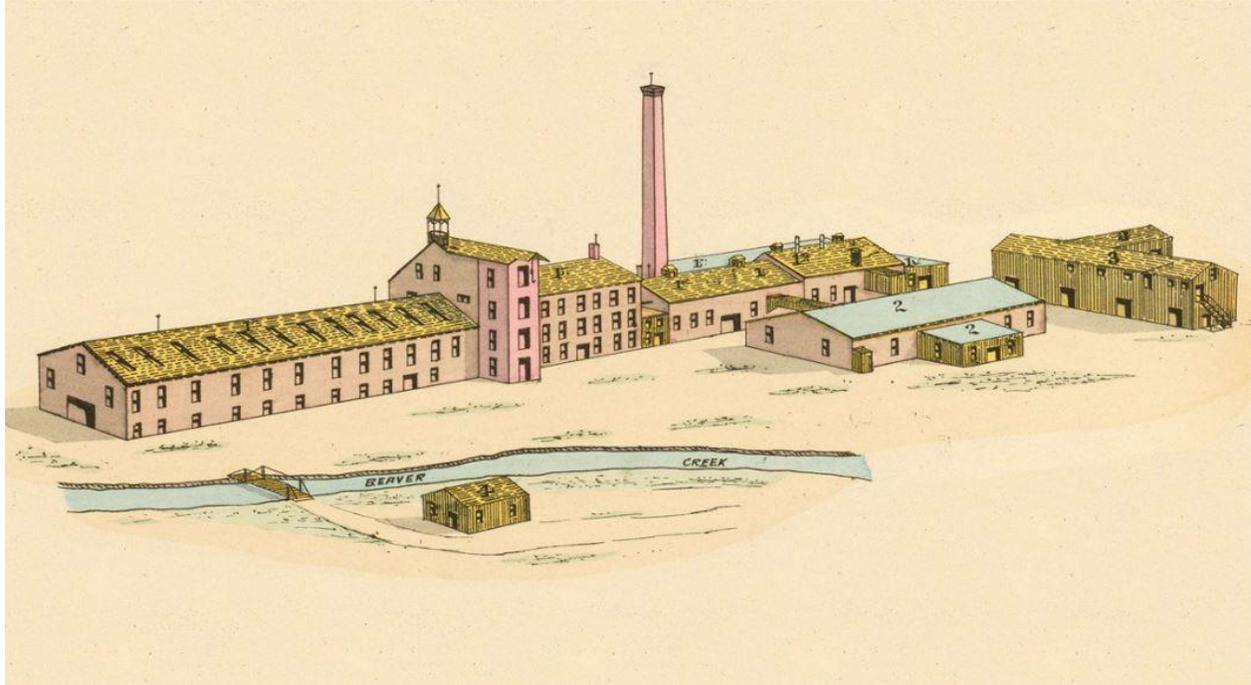
Here's how YOU can receive a Hist-O-Gram every week

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. .

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

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.

It was the Bondsville Mill in East Brandywine



Bud Bruton is a truly perceptive scholar because he was the first person who correctly identified the site in the 1889 rendering above as the Bondsville Mill.

East Brandywine Township acquired the mill site in 2005, using open space funds and a dedicated group of volunteers began cleaning up the property and making the collapsed buildings safe. While the Bondsville Mill Park opened to the public in 2015, work to expand the trails network and further stabilize the structures is ongoing.

Here's a brief history of the mill site, according East Brandywine Township's Bondsville Mill Park Committee:

- Bondsville was one of several grist mills along the Beaver Creek in the 18th Century. It was originally water powered, using a water wheel which was driven by water fed from Beaver Creek into the mill race behind the buildings
 - Abraham Bond purchased the mill in 1842, and converted it to a textile factory, producing Kentucky Jeans and establishing the small factory village of Bondsville. William D. MacFarland purchased the mill in 1848, and produced uniforms for Union soldiers during the Civil War. By 1870, the mill was powered by both water and steam.
 - In 1927, the Collins & Aikman Corp. bought the property and started producing automobile upholstery cloth. And during World War II, the firm devoted virtually all of its efforts to supplying materials for the military, including fabric for the lining of jackets of Air Force pilots and crews. A war memorial, which lists the names of employees who served in the military during the war, was erected on the site. Ben Bruton, Bud's son, restored the memorial as his Eagle Scout project.
 - After WWII, the mill produced a variety of textiles, including men's and women's wear fabrics, as well as their "Candalon" brand of woven nylon which was used in the production of automobile upholstery.

- In 1960, production stopped and the facility was used as a warehouse. It finally closed in 1965 as it fell into disrepair and some of the buildings collapsed.
- Work to develop the park as a passive recreation area and historic site has been an ongoing effort by a dedicated group of volunteers. Work is ongoing, but the park is now open to the public. The park offers a one-quarter-mile-long, compacted gravel loop trail around the buildings and along Beaver Creek. There is also a nature trail up to the water tower and a three-quarter-mile long loop to the north of the property, through an old spruce, maple and oak forest.

What was happening here 85 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in the Downingtown Archive in February 1932:

- The **Downingtown Lions Club's** welfare committee reported that over 800 hot meals had been served at the shelter on Brandywine Avenue (where the parking lot of the DNBFirst Bank is now located) in January 1932. And 87 families were receiving groceries every week, if the man of the house volunteered a day's work to a community project. However, some of the cash donated to the Lions had to be used to purchase men's and children's shoes because donations of footwear had been limited.
- The **Downingtown Alumni Association** also was experiencing Great Depression pains. Treasurer Vinton Smedley said the association had to take out a \$80 loan at the bank because there was not enough money in the treasury to cover the \$50 scholarships to be awarded to the outstanding DHS senior girl and boy at the association's annual banquet. Nominated as officers the following year were Edward McCausland, president; Francis Tweed, vice president; Sara Brown, secretary; Alice Windle, assistant secretary; and Mrs. Ernest McClure, treasurer.
- Following its first season of interscholastic competition, the following members of the **DHS field hockey team** won varsity letters: Captain Eileen Farrell, Mary Travaglini, Jane Wilson, Eleanor Davis, Esther Miskelly, Dorothy Diffenderfer, Elsie Hashinger, Thelma McQueen, Helen Hyde, Helen Good, Helen McLain and Anna Wise.
- **St. Joseph's Catholic Church** had a card party and dance at the Minquas Fire Co. The door prize, donated by Rev. Francis Fox, was a "pretty smoking stand." The unexpected highlight of the evening was a chance to meet Mrs. Jimmy Dykes, wife of the star infielder for the Philadelphia Athletics; she was the guest of Mrs. John Sheehy.

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

Vintage Ad of the Week

Wanted

A LARGE CROWD
—at the—
Senior Dance
—in the—
NINQUAS GYM
Thanksgiving Night
Come and Settle Your Turkey
Dinner with Music and
Dancing to the Tune
of
JACK KEARNS
AND HIS ORCHESTRA
The Seniors Need Your
Co-operation
A Wonderful Time
for Everyone

Admission—Fifty Cents
Time—Eight-thirty

This ad was originally published in the November 20, 1931 edition of the *Downingtown Archive*. Although the dance was sponsored by the 1932 Class at DHS, the public was welcome because it apparently was a fundraiser, perhaps to be used to help pay for the class trip to Washington, DC.

Free Ads for Non-Profits

Iron Industry History in Northern Chester County

Neil Hobbins, is the historic site manager for Pottsgrove Manor in Montgomery County and former executive director at the Mill at Anselma, will give a talk on the "History of the Iron Industry in Northern Chester County" at 7 PM Thursday, June 1 at Bell Hall, Montgomery School, 1141 Kimberton Road (Route 113), Chester Springs. Prior to the speech, there will be a complimentary wine and cheese reception from 6:30 to 7 PM. Cost: \$5 per person; no charge for members of Mill at Anselma.

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 Lindbergh baby at the 7 PM 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.

Memorial Day

There will be a Memorial Day parade in the village of Marshallton in West Bradford at 1 PM on Sunday, May 28. The Memorial Day service at Marinelli Park on Chestnut Street, Downingtown, will begin at noon on Sunday, May 28. And Downingtown's Memorial Day parade will begin at Beaver Creek School on West Pennsylvania in the borough, at 10 AM on Monday, May 29, followed by a service at Kerr Park.

Music at the Mill

An afternoon of music, food and fun for the whole family will take place at The Mill at Anselma from 3-7 PM on Sunday, June 4. Three local bands-- Good 2 Go, Caroline Reese and the Drifting Fifth, and Singles Going Steady-- will play over the course of the afternoon/evening. Although The Mill will be closed to general admissions that day, event attendees are invited to tour the mill, and watch a milling demonstration. Tickets purchased after May 22nd are \$40 for adults, and \$17 for children 12 and under. An alternative local venue has been designated in case of rain. Proceeds will benefit The Mill at Anselma. For tickets and information, call (610)827-1906, email Kathy@AnselmaMill.org, go to www.anselmamill.org and click on the event, Music at The Mill. Throughout the summer, The Mill is open for tours Thursday through Sunday from 10 AM to 4 PM. Admission to the Mill is \$5 for adults, \$4 for seniors, and \$3 for children ages 4-14. Children under 4 are free. The Mill is located on Rt. 401 (1730 Conestoga Road), ½ mile west of Rt. 113 in Chester Springs, PA.

Mac & Cheese

The Thorndale-Downingtown Rotary Club will have its sixth annual Chester County Mac & Cheese Cook-off at noon on Sunday, June 4 at Kerr Park in Downingtown. For more details, see: www.macncheesecookoff.com/about/

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.

Fine Arts Festival

The Downingtown Fine Arts Festival will be held at 202 E. Lancaster Avenue in the borough, from 10 AM until 6 PM on Saturday, May 27 and from 10 AM until 5 PM on Sunday, May 28. The free festival is presented by David

Oleski Events and the Downingtown Main Street Association, in partnership with the Borough of Downingtown. For more info on the festival, see: <http://downingtownfinearts.com/aboutdfaf.html>.

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. Sickel 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/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.