



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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downtontownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 4, No. 1

January 3, 2013

Where Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the building, which is partly shown above, will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Better yet, they will win a \$25 gift card from F.H. Swisher Plumbing & Heating, to be used at a local restaurant.

Please send your responses to: Info@downtontownareahistoricalsociety.org.

Downingtown area news in January 1977

These news items about the Downingtown area were originally published in the *East Branch Citizen* 36 years ago

Chester County commissioners started condemning private properties that were blocking sewer line construction between **Marsh Creek State Park** and the Downingtown Regional Sewer Plant. The county bought the abandoned New Holland Railroad line along the East Branch of Brandywine Creek, where the sewer line, with a capacity of handling 100,000 gallons of sewage per day, was to be installed.

Four Js, an appliance and floor covering business, which had been located at Wallace and Pennsylvania Avenues in the borough, opened a new store on the site where Devitt's Hardware had been located on East Lancaster Avenue, before it burned down in 1971.

New officers of the **Downingtown Rotary Club** were Bob Schafer, president; Millard Ryan, first vice president; Dr. Joseph McCahon, second vice president; Jack Bonham, secretary; Thomas Brookover, treasurer; Lewis Wilson, assistant treasurer; and directors Bruce Bredickas, Paul Limbach, Richard Thatcher and Frank Brouse.

Members of the newly established **East Brandywine Recreation Committee** were William Zynn, Ed McDermott, Gail McCahon, Paul Leslie and Peter Frank.

Recent **property transfers** included: 102 Worthington Drive., Uwchlan, \$41,990; 210 William St., Downingtown, \$22,000; 114 Locust Knoll Road, East Brandywine, \$56,200; and 1363 Piedmont Drive, West Bradford, \$55,500;.

Elected to serve as trustees at **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Gilbert Algier, Paul McCombs, William Woodward, Charles Glass, Lionel Shaeffer, Morris Stevens, Ralph Ardrey, Dr. Charles Bruton and Charles Espenlaub.

New officers of the Sunday School at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Eagle, were James Runyen, superintendent; Alice Styer, secretary; Michele Runyen, assistant secretary; Stan Miller, librarian; Joe Cura, song leader; and pianists Rita German, Jenny Peterson, Stan Miller and Dawn Trego.

Plans for the proposed \$23.8 million **St. John Neumann Community Medical Center** were unveiled. The facility, to be located along the Caln-Downingtown border, was to have 140 acute-care beds and 150 long-term care beds.

Downingtown Area School District officials expect to see an increase at the district's secondary schools. For example, the capacity at DHS is 1,196, but the current enrollment is 1,644. However, enrollment at the elementary schools, 3,633, is below capacity (3,700), and it is projected to decline to 3,588 by the 1981-82 school year.

Local **Girl Scout leaders**, responsible for the annual cookie sale, were Mrs. James Abrams, Mrs. John Rossiter, Bill Supplee, Mrs. Robert Richey and Jean Mauger.

Tom Fulton, Alert Fire Co., and Gil Evoli, Minquas Fire Co., were honored at the **Downingtown Fire Department's** annual banquet.

Elected to the Council of **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville, were Roland Feldman, Harry Gebhart, James Lammey, Edgar Miller, Matthew Lad and Nancy Hurst. And James Page, Louis Cracas, Joyce Miller, Joseph Moroney, Conrad Rodney and David Shaeffer were named trustees.

New part-time employees at **Central Presbyterian Church**, Downingtown, included Jean Hessler, secretary; Cookie Pannebaker, children's work coordinator; and Dave Burghart, youth worker.

Elected to the Board of Trustees at **Marshallton Methodist Church** were Robert Mackin, president; Nancy Busby, vice president; and Clinton Fetterman, secretary.

Old sign is on side of Creekside Antiques Store



Pat Butler is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify the photo above in last week's Hist-O-Gram, taken by Mike Dunn. It's the sign on the side of the building at Manor and Lancaster Avenues in Downingtown, now used by Creekside Antiques (see front of store below) owned by Beth and Dana Beach. Over the years, the building was occupied by the original Ray Sheeler Chevrolet agency, a Flying A gas station, and a tax preparation service.



The front of Creekside Antiques on Lancaster Avenue.

Clip Joint will be open Sunday, Jan. 6

The next clipping and pasting session will be held from 1-4 PM on **Sunday, Jan. 6** at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available in the lot at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays. You're welcome to arrive and leave at your leisure

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

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Vol. 4, No. 2

January 10, 2013

What and Where Is This?



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School issues dominated local news in June 1945

Although the war against Japan grabbed much of the attention in June 1945, many of the news stories published in local papers in the early weeks of that month focused on local school issues:

You recognize that **DHS** was a comparatively small high school in Chester County in 1945, when you see that only 86 students graduated from DHS that year, while there were 244 students in Coatesville's graduating class the same year.

And 13 of the graduates were already serving in the military. The only graduate on active duty who was able to attend the school's 63rd commencement exercises was Eugene Mittel. Those who were unable to attend the graduation included: Bruce Bird, George Baker, George Cain, Francis Celii, Emerson Glauner, Richard Irey, John Palmer, Robert Moore, Paul Moran, Allan Myers, John Sheehan and Jonathan Windle.

Class officers were Charles Forte, president; William Worrall, vice president; Janet Knauer, secretary; and Jane Kline, treasurer.

Also reflective of the school district's enrollment 68 years ago, 55 of the graduates were borough residents, while the rest of the graduates resided the following rural townships: East Brandywine, nine; Wallace and West Pikeland, six each; Caln, four; Upper Uwchlan and West Bradford, two each; East Bradford and Uwchlan, one each. Two Uwchlan residents graduated from West Chester High School that year.

The 34 students at the **Mount Airy School** in Uwchlan, taught by Mrs. William Yonkers, had a busy school year, especially in their efforts to support the war effort. They collected 1,080 pounds of paper, 1,115 tin cans, and 5 bags of milkweed pods (Children were enlisted to collect thousands of pounds of milkweed pods, which were sent to Petoskey, Mich., where a processing plant turned the floss into filling for life preservers).

They also collected books, comic books and detective magazines, which were sent to servicemen, and they wrote letters to GIs serving in China, France, Germany and the U.S. The seven pupils who made the honor roll were Judy Swarner, James Linderman, Henry Hine, Paul Hoeffcker, Dorothy Walton, Anna Dinsdale and Billy Ingram.

And 80 people attended **Windsor School's** end-of-term picnic in Upper Uwchlan. Winners in games were: Sue, Billy and Barbara Edwards, Barbara Trego, Norman Gottier, Larry Ladley, Mrs. Ray Woodland, Alan Dewees, Lena Frame, Goldie Jane Hubbard and Shirley Wertz.

A picnic and a musical program were held on the last day at the **Font School**, Upper Uwchlan. They included numbers sung by John Martin, Mary Margaret and Marjorie Henley, Shirley Wenger, Betty Peck, Barbara Trego and Carol Matheny. Eighth graders Earl Henley and Harry Painter passed their final exams, and Horace Smith received a reward for perfect attendance. And with the close of the school term, Mrs. Hanna Jane Ash., who was completing 20 years of teaching at Font, revealed that she was not returning to the school in September.

The 12 eighth graders who graduated from **Marshallton School** were Harvey Young, Ruth Romig, Horace Wilson, Henry Baldwin, Mary Wickersham, John Sellers, Mary Ann Cann, Arnold Haebecker, Thelma Pugh, Ralph Bane, Mary Jane Miley, Harvey Young and Edith Ann Martin.

Girls who placed in competitions at the school's picnic included: Jean Romig, Betty Bittle, Virginia English, Betty Whiteman, Mary Jane Place, Margaret Newman, Frances

Henck and Caroline Nixon. Boys who were game winners were: Elmer Fredd, Earle Young, Fred Frame, Floyd D’Ginto, Jiggs Baldwin and Dan Place.

It’s Bethel AME Church



Tracey Jones was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo of part of the front of Bethel AME Church, 221 Prospect Avenue in the Johnstown section of Downingtown. The whole front of the church is shown in the photo below.

After briefly renting a facility on Bradford Avenue, the congregation purchased land on Prospect Avenue in 1889, where the church would be erected after the cornerstone was laid there on November 13, 1892, according to Jane Davidson’s *A History of Downingtown*. The board of trustees who guided the building project included: Thomas Flowers, Isaac Trowery, Henry Johnson, Clayborn Gladman and Frederick Wilson.



The front of Bethel AME Church at 221 Prospect Avenue in Downingtown.

Downingtown area news 61 years ago

The following news items were published in *The Archive*, a Downingtown weekly newspaper, in January 1952.

Newly elected officers of **St. Anthony's Lodge**, Downingtown, were: Armand Taraschi, president; Michael Mento, vice president; Benny DelPaggio, secretary; and George Ciarlone, treasurer.

DHS field hockey players who earned letters were: Mary Jane Bird, captain, Joan Pollock, Edith Forte, B.L. Robinson, Mary Lou Foreman, Patsy Piersol, Barbara Seibert, Faye Stauffer, Dottie Kipp, Theresa Ippolito, and Betty Menna, manager.

Officers of the **Minquas Fire Co. Auxiliary** included: Mrs. Nathan Mercer, president; Mrs. Reba Burroughs, vice president; Mrs. Norman Howe, chaplain; Mrs. Carroll Lewis, recording secretary; Mrs. Warren Showalter, financial secretary; and Mrs. Paul Miller, treasurer.

Joseph Huggins was elected president of the **Downingtown Library**. Other officers were: Theodore Griffith, vice president; Mrs. Mary Bradbury Brown, treasurer; and Mrs. George Fisher, secretary.

Members of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club's** annual Husband's Night program were Mrs. William Keen, Mrs. Earl Messner, Mrs. Floyd Lilley, Mrs. Alfonso Travaglini, Mrs. Clark Reiter, Mrs. Clarence Beam, Mrs. Stephen Lucas, Mrs. H.A. Moore and Mrs. Harry Kalbitzer.

East Ward Third Graders in 1951



Ron Tipton sent us this photo of his third grade class at East Ward School in 1951, taught by the revered Elizabeth Ezra. His classmates included: first row, Duer Smedley, Bobby Ceulers, Helen Burkhardt, Betty Lou Woodward, Jeannie Bicking, Iva Darlington, Bill Brookover, Judy Wagner, Ralph McComsey, Francis Trego; second row, Billy Null, Doris Trego, Judy Baldwin, Teddy Miller, Lillian Detterline, Toni Yost, Marie DiFernando, Donald Murphy, Stuart Miesel; third row, Mary Jane Chudleigh, Larry Meredith, Timmy Mahan, Blaine Stong, Patty Zittle, Donna Lee Detweiler, Bonnie Walton, Margaret West, Ron Tipton; fourth row, Miss Elizabeth Ezra, David Fidler, Jack Swarner, Denny Myers and Frank Marcocci. **We'd like to publish more group (including sports teams, Scout troops, as well school classes) photos like this, as long as you can also provide the names of those in the photo.**

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Vol. 4, No. 3

January 17, 2013

What and Where Is This?



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More local news items published in June 1945

The following items appeared in local newspapers more than 67 years ago:

By over-subscribing its \$33,000 quota by more than \$6,000, **East Brandywine Township** outpaced the borough and six other neighboring townships in the Seventh War Bond Drive.

And the **Roosevelt Theatre** on Brandywine Avenue in the borough was offering free admission to movies to persons who bought an extra War Bond at Downingtown National Bank or the Post Office booth in the lobby of the theatre.

Editor's note: War Bonds were used to finance the U.S. military efforts during World War II. They were sold for as little as \$18.75 and matured in 10 years, at which time the federal government paid the bondholder \$25. Large denominations of between \$50 and \$1000 were also available. For those who found it difficult to purchase an entire bond at once, 10 cent savings stamps could be purchased and collected in Treasury approved stamp albums until the recipient had accumulated enough stamps for a bond purchase. Many school children bought these stamps. Over the course of the war, 85 million Americans purchased approximately \$185.7 billion of bonds.

Elected to serve as officers of the **American Legion Auxiliary** were: Mrs. Paul Dague, president; Mrs. Leroy Helms, first vice president; Mrs. Leonard Maust, second vice president; Mrs. John Fisher, treasurer; Esther Williams, recording secretary; and Anna Dougherty, corresponding secretary. Mrs. Fisher announced that Auxiliary members had been on duty at their booth every night at the Roosevelt Theatre, selling War Bonds and Stamps.

World War II also had an impact on the **YMCA Camp** in West Bradford, just below Downingtown's southern border. Due to the rationing of many types of food during the war, E. W. Barnes, the camp's executive director, continued to be concerned about the number of camping applications that could be accepted. A new feature planned for the month of August was an All-American Inter-Racial camping session for 150 girls between the ages of 10 and 16.

Editor's Note: See www.ameshistoricalsociety.org/exhibits/events/rationing.htm and www.ameshistoricalsociety.org/exhibits/ration_items.htm for more info about food and other types of rationing during World War II.

Coach Vince Daher's **DHS baseball team** won the Section Three championship in a Suburban Conference playoff game against Pottstown, when Charlie Forte hit a single with the bases loaded in the eighth inning. Whippet pitcher Rat Barrow held the Trojans to four hits.

Downingtown businessmen recognized members of the team by treating them to a dinner at the Mansion House in West Chester and a movie at the Warner Theatre afterwards. The championship trophy was presented to co-captains Jack Lyons, Dominic DiEugenio and Forte on a program broadcasted by Philadelphia radio station WIBG.

Daher and 17 members of the team also were guests at a dinner-meeting of the **Downingtown Lions Club**.

Newly elected officers of the **Lions Club** were Richard Burroughs, president; Dr. Harlan Sharp, first vice president; Charles Emery, second vice president; Herbert Bowersock, third vice president; Joseph Matthewson, treasurer; and Ralph Kinsey, secretary.

And new officers of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** were Mrs. Charles Ezrah, president; Mrs. John Forbes, vice president; Mrs. George Aumiller, recording secretary; Mrs. Thomas Brookover, corresponding secretary; and Emily Lewis, Treasurer.

Elected to lead the **Women of the Moose** in Downingtown were Sara Davis, senior regent; Helen Babb, junior regent; Mary Babb, chaplain; Mary Algiers, recorder; Carrie Francella, treasurer; Mary Hilton, graduate regent; Dorothy McClure, guide; Peggy Dowlin, assistant guide; Anna Baldwin, sentinel; and Beatrice Hashinger, pianist.

And by buying \$5,000 more War Bonds, the **Downingtown Moose Lodge's** total had reached \$21,000.

Part of this home on Route 322 was a tollhouse



Rahn Brackin was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo of the residence at 4809 Horseshoe Pike, located on the east side of Route 322 a short distance above the Route 30 Bypass. Part of the home once was a tollhouse, which dates back to the late 1780s.

According to the owner, Dr. Nathan Ensmenger, a University of Indiana (Bloomington) professor, the most striking evidence of the tollhouse can be seen in the basement, under the rear of the current house, which was constructed in 1837. The evidence shows that the tollhouse's structure was supported by a dry-laid foundation of stone and a series of hand-hewn logs, some of which still have their original bark.

The property is for sale, and contemporary photos and detailed information about it can be accessed at www.4809horseshoepike.com.

Cub Scouts toured Ashbridge House

The Historical Society hosted members of Den 5, Cub Scout Pack 2, sponsored by St. Joseph's Catholic Church, on Saturday January 12. Under the leadership of their leader, Doug Bucklin, the Cubs and their fathers toured Ashbridge House, our 304-year-old headquarters. And to comply with the requirements of their rank, the boys also worked with artifacts to learn how people lived in a different age. Fun was had by the scouts, their parents, and our volunteer archivist, Mrs. Carol Grigson.

Anyone who is involved with a Scout group, who wishes to have a tour of Ashbridge House or enjoy a program related to local history, is encouraged to call Mrs. Grigson, 610-269-1709. We can tailor the program to meet the requirements of the rank trying to be achieved.

Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

DHS Alumni Assn. banquet

The banquet will be held from 5-7 PM Saturday, April 20 at Whitford Country Club. The honored guest is Ron Ditzler, former choir director from 1969 to 1977. More information can be found on the website: www.downingtowntalumni.org.

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Vol. 4, No. 4

January 24, 2013

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Three big snow storms in early 1961 didn't deter many Downingtown area activities

The following news items were originally published in local newspapers during the last week of January and the first two weeks of February, a period in the early winter of 1961, when Chester County was hit by three major snow storms. Despite some postponements and cancellations, life continued in the Downingtown area.

The snow storms forced the **Downingtown Farmers Market** to postpone the beginning of its "More For Americans" contest. To compete each week, customers (who didn't have to buy merchandise to compete) had to collect free contest tickets from each of the market's merchants, deposit one half of each ticket in a barrel at the market, and hang on to the other half until they showed up for the drawing on Saturday night each week. Weekly Jackpot prizes included a Hotpoint dryer, a 3-piece maple living room suite, a Hotpoint washer, and a Hotpoint refrigerator. The first grand prize, to be awarded on the contest's final night was a 1961 Rambler. Other top prizes to be awarded on the last night were a 9-piece bedroom suite and an 8-piece living room suite. Bill Hart, Philadelphia TV star and resident of East Brandywine, emceed the drawings each Saturday night.

Yvette Zurburchen of Winterthur, Switzerland, was the first foreign exchange student to attend DHS in a program sponsored by the **American Field Service**. Her hosts were the Newton Thompson family of Guthriesville.

(Editor's Note: We wonder if anyone from the Downingtown area has been in contact with Ms. Zurburche, or other foreign exchange students who came to Downingtown over the years. Better yet, can any of the exchange student tell us what they've been doing over the subsequent years or provide us with their recollections of their stay here?)

The Garden Class of the **Woman's Community of Uwchlan** raised funds to improve the landscaping of the new Lionville Elementary School by conducting a tea and a "Hat Show." Members who modeled hats included: Mrs. Walter England, Mrs. Frederick Heuer, Mrs. Gilbert Smedley, Mrs. Albert Shnee, Mrs. Paul Anders, Mrs. Elroy Buttermann, Mrs. Walter Carpenter, Mrs. Garfield Smith, Mrs. William Minster and Mrs. Robert Wright.

Georgia Wagner won the spelling bee at **Downingtown Junior High**, and Mark Shrader came in second.

The **Downingtown School District** acquired a used truck for \$75, via the U.S. Defense Department's surplus property program. After the truck was towed from Fort Dix, NJ, it was reconditioned so the district's custodial and maintenance could use it.

William Wilmot, Earl Stern and Richard Keers were recognized as the **Downingtown Fire Department's** Outstanding Firemen for 1960 at the department's fifth annual banquet held at the Alert Fire Co. Fire chief Hallan Usher said the three volunteer firefighters had responded to a fire at 219 W. Lancaster Ave., where they had to crawl through dense smoke and intense heat, and break through a locked door to reach the third floor apartment where they rescued a tenant. After they resuscitated the victim, as he was being transported to the hospital in an ambulance, the men returned to the fire scene to assist in putting out the fire.

Officers elected by the congregation of **East Brandywine Baptist Church** included: Everett Henderson, Leon Faddis, Elmore Moore, Joseph McFalls and Bill Mendenhall, trustees; Edward Crane, Robert Mertz, Jesse Sanner, Asa VanLew and Howard Beale, deacons; Chris Crane and Robert Mendenhall, junior deacons; Thelma Detteline and Myrtle Reisling, deaconesses; and Joan Siever, junior deaconess.

Jack Appelby was denied a major upset in his first year of coaching the **DHS boys' basketball team** when Coatesville edged the Whippets 43-42 and clinched the first half championship of the Ches-Mont League.

The **Downingtown Opti-Mrs. Club** elected the following officers for 1961: Mrs. Joseph Poltrone, president; Mrs. Albert Burkhart, vice president; Mrs. Clair Langham, secretary; and Mrs. Clifton Walton, treasurer.

Lionville woman led school savings bank movement

The Sunday, Jan. 20, edition of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* included an article (Memory Stream, page C2) on Sara Louisa Oberholtzer, one of Lionville's most eminent citizens.

The story noted that Sara first became aware of the concept of school savings banks at the meeting of the American Economic Association in 1888. Two years later, she was appointed national superintendent of school savings bank division of the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

After she promoted the idea by publishing many pamphlets and editing *Thrift Tidings* magazine for 16 years, "15,000 schools had savings banks, in which, typically, each student would deposit a few pennies or more each week" by 1929. As a result, more than four million American school children had savings accounts in school-based banks, according to the *Inquirer* story.

Besides her school savings bank success, Sara realized many other accomplishments. Born in Lionville in 1841, her parents were Paxson and Ann Vickers. Several generations of the Vickers, a Quaker family known for their production of pottery used in many local households and their opposition to slavery. Her father, grandfather and great-grandfather were "stationmasters" on the Underground Railroad. Sometimes, they transported escaped slaves in the large, blue wagons used to deliver Vickers pottery, according to www.anselmamill.org/people.htm.

Sara attended the Thomas Boarding School in Lionville and Millersville State Normal School. At age 20, she married John Oberholtzer, who ran the Willowdale Mill (now the Mill at Anselma) in West Pikeland Township. In addition to caring for her family which included two sons, she managed to become a prolific poet, and many of her poems were published in the leading periodicals of the day.

John sold the mill in 1886, and the Oberholtzers moved to Norristown, where Sara became active in the WCTU. Subsequently, she was one of the speakers at the first meeting of the National Council of Women in Washington, DC, in 1890, and she spoke at the World's Conference of Women in Chicago in 1893 and in Geneva, Switzerland in 1903.

Sara died in 1930, and is buried in West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia.

Window is part of wall at Dane Decor



When Joe Bird was a tiny fellow, many decades ago, he used to walk from his home on Washington Avenue to Downingtown Junior-Senior High School on Manor Avenue in the borough. And to make the trip shorter, little Joe usually cut through the property of Central Presbyterian Church, constructed in 1863 at 216 E. Lancaster Ave. Slim Joe is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to recognize that the photo above is a window in the wall, which now is part of the Dane Décor furniture store. The Hamilton family established the store shortly after Central Presbyterian's congregation moved in 1972 to a new church at 100 W. Uwchlan Avenue in Downingtown.

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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downtontownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 4, No. 5

January 31, 2013

Where Was This?



The first person to correctly identify the site of this photo will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your identification entries to:

Info@downtontownareahistoricalsociety.org.

News in the Downingtown area 52 years ago

The following news items were originally published in local newspapers in the latter part of February 1961.

Mrs. George Meacham and Mrs. Hannah Gordon were hired as **school-crossing guards** in Downingtown. Police Chief Joseph Newlin said the women eventually would be given additional police duties.

Porter and Painter, Realtors, was promoting the availability of Colonial-style homes in the Whitford Hills area for \$19,500. The homes, built by Bernie Hankin, had four bedrooms and 1.5 baths.

A Teen Baseball League for boys between 13 and 15 years of age was being formed by the **Chester Springs Athletic Association**. Michael Kean, association president, appointed the following committee chairmen: Clarence Beyer, rules; Eleanor Knox, public relations; Raymond Hamilton, grounds; Doris Miller, membership; and Harold Hallman Jr., financial.

Members of the **Ladies of St. Joseph Catholic Church**, Downingtown, who were models in a fashion show, were Mrs. David Bradford, Mrs. John Belnomi, Mrs. Gene DiSantis, Mrs. Charles Snyder, Mrs. Penn Garnett, Mrs. A.N. Cipollini, Mrs. Frederick Travaglini, Mrs. William Crawford and Mrs. John DiBernardi.

Mrs. Daniel Zittle, president of the **Ladies Auxiliary of the Alert Fire Co.**, asked members to save coupons from certain cereal boxes so they could get inexpensive tablespoons for the firehall's kitchen.

Sophia Raysor, a member of the **Lyndell Grange**, won the National Grange Poster Contest.

DHS students inducted into the **National Honor Society** were Linda Aumiller, Linda Bloom, Margaret Corey, Barbara Edwards, Frances Fitzgerald, Robert French, Judy Jones, Mary Louise LeFevre, Barbara Noll, John Rogers, Jacqueline Thomas, Virginia White and Janice Windle.

Also, the four **DHS juniors** who were selected to attend a weekend of science meetings at the Drexel Institute of Technology were Gayle Davis, Lynn Barron, Marie Pollock and Gayle Ruch. And DHS Senior James Hurtt was honored for outstanding science achievements in ceremonies held at the Union League.

Awards for their store window displays during the Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's **Boy Scout Week** were presented to Keith Burns of Cub Pack 70 and Robert Sarmiento of Boy Scout troop 82.

Dental exams were done on first and third graders in the elementary schools of East Brandywine and Wallace townships by **Dr. S. W. Dietrich**.

Bob Stevens' recollections of unusual fire

Last week's Hist-O-Gram included a news item about William Wilmot, Earl Stern and Richard Keers being named the Downingtown Fire Department's Outstanding Firemen for 1960 at the department's fifth annual banquet in 1961. Fire chief Hallan Usher said the three volunteer firefighters had responded to a fire at 219 W. Lancaster Ave., where they had to crawl through dense smoke and intense heat, and break through a locked door to reach the third floor apartment where they rescued a tenant. After they tried to resuscitate the victim, as he was being transported to the hospital in an ambulance, the men returned to the fire scene to assist in putting out the fire.

That story brought back memories for Bob Stevens, a member of the Alert Fire Co. for many years.

"I had just joined the fire company 10 months prior to the fire," explained Bob in an email. The Downingtown Fire Department's annual banquet in 1960 had just finished, and Bob and four of his fellow firefighters "were getting into a car to go to Dick Thomas's for some hot dogs, because we did not get enough to eat." As they were leaving the fire station, the siren started to sound and they all jumped out of the car and ran back into the station. "As I recall, the guys were Richard Keers, Jimmy Mento, Tim Mahan, Bill Dawson and I," continued Bob.

When they arrived at the site of the blaze on West Lancaster Avenue, “the fire was raging on the third floor, left side. As it turned out later, the occupant of that apartment was rescued, but died later.

“We had a number of incidents take place that night at the fire,” added Bob. “Chief Usher was standing under a ladder, giving instructions on where to put it, and it dropped on his head. I think he had a serious headache that night.”

And firefighter Bob Moore broke his leg, when he fell into the basement. Also, Tim Mahan suffered some burns, and was transported to the hospital, along with Moore.

Despite all those events,” we did put out the fire without allowing it to extend into other apartments,” recalls Bob.

“There was one good thing that came out of that particular fire,” concludes Bob. “I met my wife that night, as she lived in the adjoining apartment. The rest is history.....”

Clip Joint will be open Sunday afternoon

We’re going to have our leisurely clipping and pasting session from 1-4 PM on Sunday at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available in the lot at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays. You’re welcome to arrive and leave at your convenience.

It was the girls' lavatory at Downingtown Junior-Senior High School



Gregg Nelms was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo of a lavatory at the Downingtown Junior-Senior High School. The photo is one of a series of shots of the school’s rooms, which were taken before it opened in 1932. Today, the building is occupied by the STEM Academy. It appears to be a girls’ lavatory, for obvious reasons.

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Blood drive at Borough Hall

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Borough Hall Annex, 4 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, from 2-7 PM Wednesday, February 20. Walk-ins will be accepted. For more info, call 1-800-733-2767.

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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

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Vol. 4, No. 6

February 7, 2013

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify the location and purpose of the site in this photo will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Better yet, they will win a \$25 gift card from F.H. Swisher Plumbing & Heating, to be used at a local restaurant.

Please send your responses to: Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Originally part of a toll house? Probably not

Our January 17 Hist-O-Gram noted that the original part of the house at 4809 Horseshoe Pike, shown below, had been a toll house, which dated back to the late 1780s, according to a website about the property, www.4809horseshoepike.com.

Located on the east side of Route 322 a short distance above the Route 30 Bypass, the toll house allegedly was enveloped by the pictured building, originally constructed in 1837, and subsequently expanded and modified over the ensuing 175 years.



However, Chester County researcher Mary Dugan has determined that no part of the house ever had been a toll house. Dugan was hired by the Old Caln Historical Society in 2004 to analyze the history of the house.

Dugan reached that conclusion after she found a notice, published in the October 6, 1909 edition of the *Coatesville Record*, that “the little, old toll-gate house on the Horseshoe Pike,” was to be razed.

She also noted that Jane Davidson, former Chester County Historic Preservation officer and author of *A History of Downingtown*, was “convinced” that the toll house had been demolished and had not been incorporated into the house.

Dugan’s report on the property provides these interesting facts:

- The turnpike, officially known as the Downingtown, Ephrata and Harrisburg Road, was formed in 1803. The tolls were set at “three cents for every five miles for a

horse or mule, nine cents for a two-horse conveyance, and twenty cents for a four-horse wagon. People going to church or a funeral passed free.”

- In 1899, toll collection ended when Chester County took over the Horseshoe Pike, which “was in such bad condition that users had, for some years, refused to pay tolls.”
- In 1955, Robert and Rita Dougherty bought the 1837 house. They and their growing family lived there for nearly 50 years. Deborah and Nathan Ensmenger bought the property in 2003. More details about the property, which is for sale, can be accessed at www.4809horseshoepike.com.

News in the Downingtown area 36 years ago

The news items noted below were originally published in local newspapers in February 1977.

Due to a fuel oil shortage and because temperatures had dropped to the lowest levels ever recorded in Northeastern United States, Gov. Milton Shapp declared that all schools in Pennsylvania had to **cancel all classes** and extracurricular activities, including sports, for several days.

Jim Hart was re-elected president of the **Uwchlan Ambulance Corps**. Newly-installed officers were Jean Corradi, vice president; Lois Norwood, corresponding secretary; Bob Kochie, treasurer; Don Dockstader and Cal Wilhelm, trustees; and Bill Davis, operations chief.

Members of the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee at **Downingtown Methodist Church** were Mrs. Charles Steeley, Mrs. Charles Bruton, Sara Brown, Thomas Brookover, Mrs. Thomas Bradley, William Woodward, Mrs. Robert Stevens, and Mrs. Charles Espenlaub.

Elected to lead the **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** were Richard Herbster, first vice president; and Joseph Stauffer, second vice president. William Hildebeitel had another year as president. Newly-elected directors were Bruce Bredickas, Pat Cassaro, Anthony Rogevich and Jonathan Stott.

Paul Brown was re-elected chairman of the **East Caln Municipal Authority**. Others elected were Geraldine Ford, vice chairman; Dr. Winston, secretary; and Edward Kirkbride, treasurer.

Recent **property transfers** included: 308 Biddle Dr., Uwchlan, \$58,000; 315 David Circle, Downingtown, \$48,900; 25 Windemere Ct., E. Brandywine, \$40,900; 850 Sugars Bridge Rd., W. Bradford, \$63,000; 57 N. Woodmont Dr., E. Caln, \$54,900.

Changes in the application failed to persuade the Chester County Health Planning Committee to approve the **St. John Neumann Medical Center**, planned to be built along the Downingtown-Caln border.

Wallace Township sought an \$18,000 grant from the Chester County Redevelopment Authority to build two lighted tennis courts at Wagenseller Park

Gaudenzia House sought to open an alternative school for some 30 troubled teenagers in a Quonset hut at the corner of Green Street and Jefferson Avenue in Downingtown.

Cub Scout Pack 8, sponsored by Hopewell Methodist Church, held a sail boat regatta. Steve Leslie was the winner for Den 1, led by Robert McCarty. The winner for Den 2, led by Betty Jefferis, was Gary Jefferis. Drew Gardiner won for Den 4, led by Carol Millward. And Mickey Rusdin was the winner for Den 5, led by Nancy Frank.

Lay ministers installed at **St. Joseph's Church**, Downingtown, were John Francella, Victor Sarkissian, Nello Caporale and Albert Homan.

Donald White, who served as a teacher, coach and administrator in the school district for 40 years, was honored when **Downingtown Junior High's** new music and physical education wing was dedicated.

It was the Gindy Manufacturing Corp. headquarters



Rahn Brackin is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first caller to correctly identify this as a photo of the Gindy Manufacturing Corp. office building, at the intersection of Chestnut Street and Boot Road. Founded by David Ginsburg in 1940, Gindy's 250 employees were producing enclosed aluminum truck trailers at the East Caln site by 1965. In January 1966, however, a disastrous fire destroyed the plant, and the operation was moved to Eagle. Budd Co. acquired Gindy in 1975. And in 1985, Budd sold the business to Thayer Trailer Co., which closed in 1987.

The photo was taken by Ron Tipton in the mid-1950s, when his family lived on the second floor of the Gindy headquarters. In the ensuing years, the building in East Caln was razed, and the site now is occupied by Sunbelt Rentals.

(Editor's Note: The Historical Society is always on the lookout for printed materials and artifacts related to Gindy Manufacturing or any other Downingtown area business. If you wish to donate anything to our archival collection, please call us at 610-269-1709. Thanks.)

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Vol. 4, No. 7

February 14, 2013

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Did the Lincoln Funeral Train stop at Downingtown?

By Jim Sundman

Just before 3 PM on Saturday, April 22, 1865, the funeral train of Abraham Lincoln made a stop right here in Downingtown. This event has long been a source of pride for our community, especially since the "Lincoln Special" made few stops at small towns like Downingtown along its 13-day, nearly 1,700 mile journey from Washington, DC to the President's final resting place in Springfield, IL. The train generally made scheduled stops only at larger towns and cities where public and private viewings were held.

Why did the Special stop in Downingtown? One account is that the funeral party stopped to eat at the Pennsylvania House and during the stop the honor guard accompanying the casket of the President drilled on Lancaster Avenue. Another account is that the train made a special stop at Glen Isle Farm about a half mile west of the depot so the McIlvaine family could personally pay their respects to the deceased president (Abraham McIlvaine, who died in 1863, was a friend of Lincoln's from the days they served together in the U.S. House of Representatives).

But neither story is mentioned in contemporary accounts. In fact, what is written contradicts them. The train stopped in Downingtown was for a much simpler reason: the water in the locomotive needed to be topped-off and the tender re-filled with wood. The Special left Harrisburg nearly four hours before and required refueling in order to continue into Philadelphia. Downingtown had the facilities to do this and was accomplished in a very short time before the train continued east. "On we ran rapidly to Downingtown," a correspondent for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote from the train, "where we waited five minutes for wood and water."

Four years earlier, the train bringing President-Elect Lincoln to Washington stopped in Downingtown for the same reason. "In Downingtown, we stopped for wood and water," a writer noted on February 21, 1861. The brief stop allowed Lincoln to say a few words to the large crowd that had gathered, but as soon as the train finished refueling, it continued on to Harrisburg.

In 1865, the Special was on an even tighter schedule. In fact, the train's schedule was so tight that even a slight delay at Elizabethtown was noted by another writer due to a "rush over the wood-piles by men, women, and children to see the funeral car." At Lancaster, still another reporter wrote, "the train stopped for so short a period of time, and as the hour is late, it is impossible to give a full description of the [funeral] car in detail." Newspaper accounts of the day are filled with such details of the train's passage, and if the Special stopped in Downingtown so the funeral party could have dinner, or an exclusive stop was made for a private family, it no doubt would have been mentioned.

Still, the short stop in Downingtown of the Lincoln Special was a once-in-a-lifetime event and was certainly never forgotten by those who witnessed it. Unlike at Parkesburg, where a half hour before stopping at Downingtown, "the train ran so swiftly by that there was barely time for them to catch a glimpse of the funeral car," according to the *Inquirer*.

Downingtown residents were more fortunate. The train came to a stop where the crowd "quietly gathered around the rear of the train, and stood with their heads uncovered" until it departed, noted an *Inquirer* reporter.

Jim Sundman has lived with his wife and five girls in the Johnsontown section of Downingtown for 13 years, where he has been (slowly) restoring his 1875 house. He has worked for Amtrak for nearly 17 years in the Market Research and Analysis Department. Sundman, who has a "strong personal interest in history and genealogy," has authored several published articles, including one on the history of Johnsontown (See <http://downingtowndoes.com/2012/07/01/how-johnsontown-got-its-name/>) as well as several on the 13th New Jersey Regiment, which fought in the Civil War.

Downingtown area news in July 1945

The following items were published in local newspapers 68 years ago.

Although the war in the Pacific was winding down and Japan would surrender in several weeks, recruits were still being inducted by the **Downingtown Selective Service Board**. Those who joined the Army in July 1945 included: Paul Brinton, Frank Marco, Henry Seiders, Frank DiOttavio, and Kenneth Seibert, all from Downingtown; and William Harris, Lyndell. Also, David Kochel, Lionville, joined the Navy.

The **Downingtown School Board** announced that it had hired two full-time, elementary school teachers, who would begin teaching at West Ward School in September. They were Madeline Laird of Downingtown, who would teach math, and Shirley Holly of Philadelphia, who would be the “Union room” teacher.

(Editor’s comment: As noted in the February 23, 2012 Hist-O-Gram, children of color in the first through fifth grades in the borough’s two elementary schools were all consolidated into one classroom, which was called the Union Room. In February 1950, the School Board agreed to discontinue this practice, which had begun many decades ago. That decision was made after the Downingtown Branch of the NAACP petitioned the board to stop racial segregation in the borough’s grade schools.)

Installed as officers of the **Downingtown Lions Club** were: Richard Burroughs, president; Dr. Harlan Sharp, first vice president; Charles Emery, second vice president; Herbert Bauersock, third vice president; Ralph Miller, secretary; Evans Miller, financial secretary; and Joseph Matthewson, treasurer.

Lt. Theodore R. Griffith, a Downingtown attorney, received a Bronze Star for his performance as a Combat Information Center officer on a Navy destroyer escort on a September 1944 mission.

Friends of the late **Gibson McIlvaine** of Downingtown announced plans to raise \$25,000 in order to construct a building in his memory at Camp Horseshoe, a Boy Scout camp in southern Chester County. The building would have a kitchen and dining room capable of accommodating 32 Scouts. McIlvaine was reputed to be the “father of Scouting” in the county.

Former foreign exchange student lives in Exton

Our January 24, 2012 Hist-O-Gram included a news item about the first foreign exchange student to attend DHS in 1961. We commented that it would be interesting to learn if anyone had kept in touch with a former foreign exchange student at DHS.

In response to that query, Nancy Thompson of East Brandywine informed us that Ruth Auza, who attended DHS during the 1973-74 school year, lives in Exton.

According to the DHS 1974 yearbook, Ruth found the “permissiveness of America to be in sharp contrast to the strict Catholic life in Bolivia.” And her biggest problem was getting used to the cold weather here, since the temperature in La Paz was between 55 and 65 degrees, year round. But, overall, her year at DHS was a “pleasant experience.”

In a recent telephone interview Ruth explained that she came here from La Paz, Bolivia, as an exchange student, sponsored by Rotary International. She was hosted by the Balderston, Smith and McCahon families.

Since she had attended the American School in Bolivia, Ruth said she spoke fluent English and didn’t have any language problems while attending DHS. In fact, she was a

straight A student, and West Chester State College offered her a full scholarship. However, her family wanted her to return to Bolivia, instead.

After completing her studies at a bi-lingual school in Bolivia, Ruth was an executive secretary at American firm located there, before she married her Bolivian boyfriend, Emilio Salgueiro, who was studying electrical engineering in Mexico. While living in Mexico, the Salgueiros had three children.

They moved to St. Louis, MO, when her husband got a job with Burroughs. After three years passed, they moved to Exton, when Emilio was transferred to the Burroughs plant in Tredyffrin Township, Chester County. The Salgueiros have resided in Exton for more than 26 years, and their children graduated from DHS East. All three kids now are on their own, after earning college degrees.

Meanwhile, Ruth worked for QVC in West Chester for 19 years as a translator, in customer service and in the office of the president, until she became a full-time student at West Chester University, where she was a Spanish major. She was a magna cum laude graduate in December and hopes to get a teaching job.

It's a limekiln on Quarry Road in East Caln



John Carbo is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as a limekiln on the west side of Quarry Road, near the intersection of Boot Road in East Caln. Several people also mentioned the limekiln on Marshallton-Thorndale Road in West Bradford.

A limekiln is a furnace used to reduce naturally occurring forms of calcium carbonate, in the form of limestone, to lime. Limekilns are often constructed into a hillside so that they can be filled or charged by tipping material into the chamber through a hole in the top, which also serves as a flue.

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Blood drive at Borough Hall

There will be a Red Cross Blood Drive in the Borough Hall Annex, 4 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, from 2-7 PM Wednesday, February 20. Walk-ins will be accepted. For more info, call 1-800-733-2767.

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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

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Vol. 4, No. 8

February 21, 2013

Where and What Is This?



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Info@downingtownareahistoricalociety.org.

Local news in the Downingtown area in August 1945

Celebrations broke out in the Downingtown area, as they did in all the villages, towns and cities across the United States, on VJ Day, when Japan surrendered and World War II ended in August 1945. But after that spurt of exuberance, life went on in the Downingtown area as it did in the rest of the nation. Noted below are some examples of what was going on here 68 years ago, according to local newspapers.

Auditors Richard Warren, William McNamara and Ralph Kinsey reported to the **Downingtown School Board** that the borough school system's operating expenses for the 1944-45 school year totaled \$134,467. Also, the tuition rate, paid by townships for students who attended the borough schools, had been changed to \$10 per month for pupils attending the DHS Junior-Senior High School and \$6.18 for students enrolled at elementary schools in the borough.

And in **West Bradford Township**, the Cottage School on Broad Run Road was closed, and students formerly assigned to that school reassigned to the Marshallton Consolidated School. The West Bradford School District's teachers included Anna Nields, Elizabeth McIntyre and Mrs. Lewis Wickersham.

Newly elected officers of the **Downingtown Women's Christian Temperance Union** were Mrs. Harry Brown, president; Mrs. Edwin Wagner, vice president; Mrs. Leonard Maust, secretary; and Mrs. Lemon Habecker, treasurer.

Former **Romansville School** students who served in the military during World War II included Carleton and Duer Cook, William and Douglas Fellenbaum, Lee, Ralph and Robert Caldwell, Robert Fenimore, Milton Hiddleston, Herbert Osborn, Norman and Elmer Smith, Raymond Sharitz, Wesley Walton and William Yetter.

John "Pepper" Petrella, former DHS and Penn State star halfback, signed a contract to play for the Pittsburgh Steelers. He recently was discharged from the U.S. Army Air Force, after serving in the China-Burma-India theatre.

The **Philadelphia Eagles**, whose pre-season training camp was held at West Chester State Teachers College, had a practice session at the DHS football stadium, now known as DiSerafino Stadium.

News items published in *The Archive* 61 years ago

Noted below are items originally published in *The Downingtown Archive* in February 1952.

Weldin Bicking was elected president of the **Central Presbyterian Church** choir. Other officers were Floyd Lilley, vice president; Margaret Flinn, secretary; and Mrs. Hallan Usher, treasurer.

New members of the **Alert Fire Co. Auxiliary** included Mrs. William Ash, Mrs. Lewis Wilson, Mrs. Freda Seeds, Mrs. Gladys Rebar, Mrs. Teresa Christ and Mrs. Margaret March.

New councilmen at **Messiah Lutheran Church** were Landis Heller, Elmer Hemberger, Jason Dreibelbis, and Ted Heinly. Stanley Walters and James Steganius were re-elected. And Arthur Glauner and Mark Shaw were made life members.

Officers elected to lead the **Upper Uwchlan Farmers Club** were Elmer White, president; Mrs. Walter Styer, secretary; and Mary Pyle, pianist.

Officers elected by members of the **Glenmoore Fire Co.** were Harold Hannum, president; Gilbert Houck, vice president; John Shrader, secretary; William Patton, assistant secretary; Ernest Phillips, treasurer; and Clarence Miller, trustee.

It's the former Grange Hall in downtown Lyndell



Rahn Brackin is the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo of the Grange Hall on Creek Road (Route 282) in downtown Lyndell in East Brandywine. The hall was built in 1896 by the Lyndell Christian Temperance League, and was sold to the Lyndell Grange. Currently, the building is used by the New Testament Baptist Church.

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Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

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Vol. 4, No. 9

February 28, 2013

Where and What Is This?



The first person to correctly identify this site will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Better yet, they will win a \$25 gift card from F.H. Swisher Plumbing & Heating, to be used at a local restaurant.

Please send your responses to: Info@downtontownareahistoricalociety.org.

Much of local news focused on schools

Many of the stories about the Downingtown area, published in local newspapers in early March 1961, focused on the school system. The articles included:

Janet Strawsnyder and Janine Davis represented Downingtown Junior HS in a **public speaking contest**, sponsored by the Chester County PTA.

DHS students Carmella Baxter, John Rogers, Thomas Yerkes, and Neil Shields made the **Southeastern District Chorus**, comprised of singers from high schools in Chester, Delaware and Philadelphia Counties.

First place winners in the Downingtown School District's second annual **Industrial and Science Fair** were David Lord, DSrHS; Harry Simms, DJrHS; and Jeff Kohlas, elementary schools.

The Downingtown Joint High School Board heard a report on how DJrHS compared to the 237 junior high schools in 23 states recently **surveyed by Harvard's Dr. James Conant**. Thomas Stoner, principal, said DJrHS doesn't offer algebra or a foreign language in the junior high curriculum, as recommended by Conant. However, Stoner noted that the local school's students devoted 71 percent of their time in school to academic efforts, which was slightly more than the surveyed schools did. And homework for Downingtown pupils slightly exceeded the Conant report's standards.

Although top Whippet scorer Tom Yerkes couldn't play because of a torn leg ligament, the DHS boys' basketball team earned a shot at winning the **District I Class B championship** when Charlie Newlin banked in a last-second shot to beat Kennett Square 61-59. But dreams of a district title were shattered when Media beat DHS 71-41, despite Sam Westmoreland's 18-point effort.

Other Downingtown area news 52 years ago included:

Gene DiSantis bought the 150-year-old **Swan Hotel** and planned to re-open the Downingtown landmark on April 1.

Lionville Cub Scouts who won Genius Kit awards at the pack's Blue and Gold banquet were: Danny Hayes, Harry Wright and Ralph Hill, most ingenious; Tommy Isinger and David Grubb, best workmanship; Richard Faddis and Buddy Roach, most useful; Keith Lambert and Rickey Gilbert, most decorative; Tony McQuail and Tommy McCurdy, funniest.

Upper Uwchlan residents selected to run on the Republican ticket in the spring primary were Doris Pierson, inspector of election; Allen Dewees, township supervisor; Ruth Jackson and Rev. Carl Kopenhaver, school director; and Guyon Mercer, assessor; and Janet Garvine, tax collector.

Models for the **Ladies of St. Joseph** fashion show were Mrs. John Belnomi, Mrs. David Bradford, Mrs. Gene DiSantis, Mrs. Charles Snyder, Mrs. Penn Garnett, Mrs. A.N. Cippolini, Mrs. Frederick Travaglini, Mrs. William Crawford and Mrs. John DiBernardi.

And those who modeled clothes from Leta's Dress Shop, Downingtown, in the fashion show sponsored by the **Auxiliary of the East Brandywine Fire Co.** were Mrs. Donald Bower, Mrs. Maurice Moses, Mrs. Charles Hilton, Mrs. Vernon Jameson, Mrs. Frank Swarner, Mrs. Jean Laird, Nancy Gindin, Barbara Thompson, Beverly Laird and Mrs. Michael Filoromo.

Clip Joint won't be open March 3

Volunteers usually come to Ashbridge House, on Route 30 in East Caln, on the first Sunday of each month to clip and paste newspaper articles. However, there won't be a clipping and pasting session on the afternoon of Sunday, March 3 because there will be another function at our 304-year-old headquarters that afternoon. The next clipping and pasting get-together will be held from 1-4 PM Sunday, April 7. Hope to see you then.

It's in Marinelli Park, but what is it?



Many Hist-O-Gram subscribers correctly recognized that the shed pictured above (taken by Mike Dunn) is located in Marinelli Park in Downingtown. However, we're still unsure about the history of the shed. So, it's impossible to determine a winner in last week's competition.

Many people believe the shed had been used by those who guarded the Pennsylvania Railroad's Trestle Bridge, along the Downingtown-West Bradford border, during World War II. And several people claim the bridge was protected from saboteurs by military personnel, and not local volunteers. Guarding the bridge was critical at the time because so many of the Pennsy's freight trains carried military supplies.

But some people think the shed in Marinelli Park was used by volunteer plane spotters, who were part of the Aircraft Warning System during World War II. Spotters were trained to identify and record sightings of planes flying overhead. To identify enemy planes, some of the spotters used aircraft silhouette cards, which are shown in www.ameshistoricalsociety.org/exhibits/events/aircraft_spotting_cards.htm.

Ginny Pierce recalls that when she and Eddie Aumiller were youngsters, they visited the spotter's site, under the guidance of Eddie's father, George Aumiller, a volunteer spotter. The

site they saw was located in the middle of a corn field on the Hannum farm, now owned by the Mattioni family, on the east side of Uwchlan Avenue (Route 113) in the borough. That's the only aircraft observation post in the Downingtown area we've heard about, so far. Let us know if you know about other spotting sites in the area.

Please send your comments, insights, reactions, etc. on how the shed was used to:
Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

Where is Marinelli Park?

According to the borough's website—www.downingtowntown.org—Marinelli Park was formally dedicated on Saturday November 13, 2004. It is located on Lincoln Avenue at the site of an abandoned parking lot acquired by the Borough as part of the Main Street Village development. The development is located on the site that was previously occupied by the O'Brien complex, located along Green St. and Washington Ave. That property had housed the Beloit Corporation's "Eastern" division, and prior to that, was known as Downingtown Manufacturing Co. In the late 1950's, employment at the then "Beloit Eastern" plant had grown so large that a parking lot was constructed along Lincoln Ave. Over time, the parking lot filled with silt from the constant flooding from the Little Park Run tributary. Soon, both the parking lot and the industrial site were abandoned and became terrible eyesores.

The Downingtown Main Street Association secured grants from the state to demolish and clean up this old industrial site. An agreement was reached between property owner Gary Silversmith, of Downingtown, and the Main Street Village developer, S & S Development Corporation, whereby the former parking lot would be turned over to the Borough to be used as parkland.

Downingtown Borough secured a Growing Greener Grant from the state, providing funds for storm water management, returning the stream bed to its original condition, and educational purposes.

Why Marinelli Park?

In the spring of 2001, the Borough of Downingtown named a 4.2-acre parcel of land on Lincoln Avenue "Marinelli Park," to honor two brothers, Dominic and James Marinelli, who died in World War II. The Marinelli family lived in the immediate neighborhood.

During World War II, almost everyone was involved in the war effort. Many served, and some gave their all, but few experienced the loss sustained by the Marinelli family. Mrs. Flavia Marinelli's brother, Tony Duca (U.S. Army Air Corps), was killed in action on February 14, 1944. On October 8, 1944, her elder son, James Marinelli (U.S. Army) was killed in northern Italy. By the spring of 1945, the war in Europe was nearing conclusion, and the family pinned its hopes on the safe return of the younger son, Dominic (U.S. Marine Corps), who was stationed in the Pacific. Sadly, Dominic Marinelli was killed on the island of Okinawa on April 14, 1945.

Lore has it, the family dogs howled on the evenings the brothers died. The Marinelli family never totally recovered from their loss.

In our small community, over one thousand young men and a few women were in the service during World War II. Eighteen from Downingtown and another six from the surrounding townships gave their lives during the war. The names of all these servicemen

are listed on the Downingtown Area Veterans Memorial at Kerr Park. You may visit the Veterans Memorial site at www.dvmf.org.

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March 7, 2013

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Downingtown area news in March 1977

The Downingtown School Board approved plans to build **eight-room additions** to the high school and at Lionville Junior High. Both additions were projected to cost \$400,000.

And school director Jonathan Kulp said there was a possible need to build a **second high school** in the district. However, Dr. Charles Micken, superintendent, noted that the district's \$1.2 million debt, which was being paid off by taxpayers, was the largest debt obligation among all the school districts in the county because Downingtown had experienced the highest growth rate over the past 15 years.

About 100 people attended **Boy Scout Troop 79's** annual dinner, celebrating the unit's 33rd anniversary. The troop was chartered by Glen Moore Methodist Church.

Members of **Downingtown Methodist Church's** Administrative Board included: Eleanor Algier, chairperson; Mindy Shaeffer, secretary; and Emily Lewis, Elizabeth Brookover, Shirley Shaeffer, Robert Moyer, Shirley Moyer, Helen Wagner and Lambert McGuckin.

Mike Johnson, a Lionville Junior High student, won the ninth annual **foul shooting contest**, sponsored by the Downingtown-Uwchlan Recreation Commission. Other winners were Jimmy Lownes, elementary boys; Patty Welch, elementary girls; Lisa Zittle, junior high girls; Mark Keller, senior high boys; Debbie Hannum, senior high girls. John Francella was the adult division winner.

Recent **property transfers** included: 412 Concord Rd., Uwchlan, \$50,000; 8 Overlook Dr., W. Bradford, \$53,000; 123 Ridgewood Cir., E. Brandywine, \$65,500; 408 Sunset Dr., Downingtown, \$42,000; and 33 Christiana Dr., Upper Uwchlan, \$59,562.

Trustees recently elected at **Windsor Baptist Church**, Eagle, were David Simpson, chairman; Ralph Mertz, vice chairman; John Nagle, secretary; and Elmer Murdoch, treasurer.

The **Uwchlan Ambulance Corps** bought a second unit, and Ms. Sam Hart and Chester Hershey joined the staff.

The **DHS Concert Band** traveled to Ossining NY (home of Sing Sing prison) to participate in a band exchange program with the local high school there. And the DHS band hosted the Ossining High School band in April.

Members of **St. Paul's Lutheran Church**, Lionville, voted to renovate the barn on its Village Avenue property, and to build a new nave.

Jack Hines received the firefighter's horn in recognition of his three years service as chief, at the **West Bradford Fire Co.'s** annual dinner dance. Pete Supplee was named Firefighter of the Year.

Bill Mason, who chaired the borough's Bicentennial Committee in 1976, received the Distinguished Civic Award at the **Greater Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's** annual dinner dance. The special group award was presented to the Hilltoppers of Hopewell United Methodist Church, who had been presenting the Passion Play for 14 years.

Mystery about the shed in Marinelli Park almost completely solved

Diane DiMartin appears to have solved much of the mystery about how the shed, which was installed in Marinelli Park in recent years, was used during the WW II era.

Diane's grandfather, Donato Menna, who built the house on West Pennsylvania Ave., was one of the volunteers who used the shed to spot enemy planes, based on information provided by her now-deceased mother, Julia Menna DiMartin.

The shed was used to store garden equipment and tools in the yard of 428 W. Pennsylvania Ave., Downingtown, by at least three owners over several decades following WW II, according to Diane.

Now we have to figure out where the shed had been located when it was used for plane spotting. We know it wasn't the plane spotting shed on the Hannum farm on Uwchlan Avenue (Route 113) in Downingtown, because Ginny Pierce has informed us that a large section of that shed was constructed of wire screening.

And based on info provided by Sandy Snyder Brannan, there was a plane spotting site in Wallace Township during WW II. Sandy, who is the township Historic Commission's archivist, tells us that when she was a youngster, she accompanied her mother, a volunteer plane spotter, to the observation post in Glenmoore. We hope to have details on that spotting site in next week's edition.

In fact, we suspect there were more spotting posts in other parts of the Downingtown area, and we hope to hear from people who know anything about those sites.

Also, we still haven't determined who was guarding the Pennsylvania Railroad's Trestle bridge during WW I.

So, why are we making such a big deal out of the shed and Trestle Bridge mysteries? It's just one example of how much fun local history can be, especially if you approach it as a mystery story. And it demonstrates that everyone who lives through a major event, like WW II, becomes a part of local history because almost everyone in the Downingtown area had a role to play. That's why we think you'll enjoy reading further excerpts as these shed stories continue to unravel in the coming weeks.

By the way, you can access a copy of the program for the dedication of Marinelli Park in November 2004 at:

http://webapps.chesco.org/heroes/marinelli_park/Marinelli%20Park%20DedicationRev1.pdf.

Minquas shakes into new firehouse

Members of the Minquas Fire Co. recently moved from their historic firehouse on East Lancaster Avenue to their new quarters at 141 Wallace Avenue in the borough. The former firehouse, built in 1909, will soon become a Molly Maguires Restaurant. Check out www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMrxL3NaMRE to see how the firefighters did the Harlem Shake as they moved Station 46's equipment into the new facility.

Another DHS grad wins an Oscar

Scott Vosbury, who graduated from DHS in 2000, recently won an Oscar for Best Visual Effects. Vosbury is a supervisor for Rhythm and Huse Studio of El Segundo, CA, which won an Academy Award for the special effects it developed for the movie *Life of Pi*.

Vosbury has done special effects work on: *X-Men: First Class*; *The A-Team*; *Night at the Museum: Battle of the Smithsonian*, and *The Golden Compass*.

Following his graduation from DHS, Vosbury earned a degree in film and animation at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Another DHS alumnus who was an Oscar winner was Mark Lasoff, Class of 1981, who was part of the team that won an Academy Award in 1988 for Visual Effects in the blockbuster movie *Titanic*.

Besides *Titanic*, Lasoff worked on other Academy Award-winning or nominated films, including *Apollo 13*, *The Hollow Man*, *True Lies* and *Total Recall*. He also received an Emmy as animation supervisor on NBC's 1992 Summer Olympics broadcast opening.

It's the Lindley Hill Cemetery in East Caln



Robert Faller was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this photo, taken by Mike Dunn, as the Lindley Hill Cemetery, located in the woods, off Winding Way and near the Woodmont Apartments in East Caln. Established in 1851, the cemetery is one of the oldest African-American cemeteries in Chester County. There had been a modest, stone church on the property, but it burned down in the 1930s.

Currently, the cemetery is owned by the Bethel A.M.E Church, Prospect Avenue, Downingtown. The cemetery is casually maintained by caring neighbors.

Today, American flags mark the graves of Anderson, Berry, Brown, Clark, Cole, Hill, Hilton, Johnson, Miller, Molson, Smith, Solomon, Stephenson, Thompson, Thomas, Washington, and Wilson, who all fought in the Civil War. And Cole and Smith had served in the 54th Regiment Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which was one of the first official African-American units to be part of the Union Army during the Civil War. The movie *Glory*, with Denzel Washington, was based on the 54th Regiment, which was also known as the United States Colored Troops

Much of the available information about the cemetery was retrieved by Dan Lindley, the county's pre-eminent cemetery historian, who initially was intrigued by its name.

Lindley began his research on the cemetery in 2005, when he photographed grave sites with tombstones. (See www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=cr&CRid=2273722&CScnty=2255&CSsr=121) All surnames found on tombstones were researched in the Chester County Historical Society's clippings files, to identify other members of a family that may be buried in Lindley Hill, based on obituaries in the Daily Local News, and file cards from documents kept at Chester County's Office of Veteran's Affairs, or an accompanying article.

Other surnames were researched, based on the legend of the cemetery's geographical survey, www.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/tsimages/lindleyhill/lhlegend.pdf, in 1992 by Robert Lowe.

Based on all that research, Lindley created a chart, which notes extensive information of persons buried in the cemetery. The chart can be accessed at www.usgwarchives.net/pa/chester/tsimages/lindleyhill/lindleyhill.pdf.

If you have additional information about the cemetery, please contact Lindley via: Danoh19344@hotmail.com.

Coming events & activities in Downingtown area

GEYA registration

Glenmoore Eagle Youth Association offers recreational soccer programs for kids from Pre-K through 12th grade, with no residency restrictions. Late registration is open until March 15. Go to www.geyasoccer.org to register.

GEYA also offers the HIGH 5 Soccer Program for young athletes (5-19) with special needs. The program is designed to improve the overall fitness, self-esteem and social skills of each child. Registration is always open for HIGH 5 Soccer and there is no cost to participants. You can register now for the spring season, which begins in April, at www.geyasoccer.org.

GEYA is always looking for high school students to help out as "buddies" for the HIGH 5 soccer program. This service can count towards a high school graduation project.

Contact Bill LaTorre at BillL@geyasoccer.org for more information.

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

Interesting local history, accessed from our archives

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

Vol. 4, No.11

March 14, 2013

Where and What Is This?



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Local news in March 1961:

Plans for new Post Office ‘undesirable’

Warren Strawsnyder, chairman of the Downingtown Planning Commission, told members of the local Chamber of Commerce that the U.S. Post Office Department’s proposal to locate the new Post Office at 45 W. Lancaster Avenue (Currently the site of Priori’s Mattress Warehouse) was wrong.

Although the Planning Commission recognized that the borough needed a new postal facility because the current Post Office had outgrown its space in the municipal building, Strawsnyder claimed that planned location on Route 30 was “undesirable.”

The Commission, added Strawsnyder, believed the proposed location was unwise because it would be on a major thoroughfare, already burdened with heavy traffic; and the traffic problems would be exacerbated by the additional trucks and cars going in and out of the Post Office’s parking lot. The Planning Commission wanted postal officials to consider several other locations.

The location of the Downingtown Post Office had been a controversial lightning rod in the borough since the late 19th Century, because of decades-long dissension between residents of the East and West Wards.

The Borough’s East Enders felt deprived because the town’s Post Office had been located, for decades, on West Lancaster Avenue, across from the Pennsylvania Railroad Station. That location was a matter of convenience and efficiency, because the railroad transported much of the mail coming into and going out of the borough.

The discord, which had lingered for more than three decades, reached such a crescendo that on March 27, 1890, Congressman Smedley Darlington persuaded the U.S. Postmaster General to allow Downingtown to become the only borough in the United States to have two post offices.

Buoyed by their success on the postal front, the East Enders then tried to officially split the borough in two, with the Brandywine Creek being the demarcation line. Thankfully, that proposal was shot down by Borough Council because splitting the town would have been expensive as well as more divisive.

The dissension began to disappear in the mid-1920s, when borough councilmen Allen Keim and Guyon Miller were determined to build a municipal building that would help heal the psychological split in the borough. They also thought the growing town needed a central seat of government. Borough Council had been holding its meetings in the Alert Fire Co. since 1892.

The councilmen’s dream became a reality when members of the Downingtown Businessmen’s Club, forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce, agreed to underwrite the construction of a new Borough Hall, adjacent to the east side of the Brandywine.

More important, plans for the municipal building included the U.S. Post Office’s Department agreement to consolidate the two Post Offices into a single space in the Borough Hall for a nominal lease fee.

And to sweeten the deal, federal postal officials also agreed to start delivering mail to all borough homes and businesses at no extra cost.

Additional local news in March 1961

The **DHS Concert Band**, under the direction of William Ifert, gave its first concert at the new high school. Student directors Lt. Lewis Wilson and Capt. Thomas Yerkes, respectively, led the band when "Colonel Bogey" and "The Black Knight" were played. And Christian Crane played a marimba solo.

Norman Frank was elected president of the **Upper Uwchlan Farmers Club**. Mrs. Oscar Darlington was elected secretary-treasurer.

The **Marshallton Horse Show**, last staged in 1939, was to be held in May at the Charles Cann residence on Lucky Hill Road. Sub-committee chairmen were: Mrs. Donald Moore, prizes; Ladies Auxiliary, West Bradford Fire Co., refreshments; William Hill and Nils Edwards, grounds and jumps; Henry C. Baldwin, prize list; Ernest Fling and William Bittle, prize booth; Edwin Hill, publicity.

Committee chairs for the Fair at **East Ward School** in April were: Mrs. S.D. Hutchison, bake table; Mrs. Edward Campbell, fancy table; Mrs. Hallan Usher, snack bar; Mrs. Robert Flagg, games; and Mrs. Kenneth McCardell, pony rides.

Mrs. Edward Klink was elected president of the **Auxiliary of the Brandywine 845 Post, VFW**. Other officers are Mrs. Weston Touchton, senior vice president; Mrs. Earl Merrill, junior vice president; Mrs. William Wilmot, treasurer; Mrs. Mary Witmer, chaplain; Mrs. Charles Hilton, conductress; and Mrs. Mary Jane Laird, trustee.

Members of **Lionville Intermediate Girl Scout Troop 57**, led by Mrs. Peter Klesko and Mrs. Arthur Bradberry, made Easter baskets for needy children and scrapbooks for children in Chester County Hospital. Girls who helped were Linda Hill, Susan Just, Holly Poole, Debbie Wright, Frances Slesko, Shirley Sorenson, Mary Lou Blake, Patty Dunn and Beth Bradberry.

New officers of the **St. Anthony's Lodge Women's Auxiliary** were Jerry Marino, president; Pat Ruffini, vice president; Theresa Bogush, recording secretary; Mary Celii, corresponding secretary; Molly Taraschi, treasurer; and Mary Ciarlone, hostess.

Participants in a play at **Hopewell Methodist Church** were Mrs. Gladys Jefferis, Kathy Kring, Barbara Thompson, Barry Piersol, Sandy and Linda Lammey, Mrs. Mary McCausland, Mrs. Nelda Kring, Mrs. Frances Shank, Mrs. Elsie Sinex, Mrs. Kathryn Boyd and Rev. Donald Bower.

For the first time, all employees of the **Downingtown Paper Co.** could buy stock in the company, via a five-year payroll deduction plan. Available at \$22.25 per share, a total of 5,000 shares of common stock were made available, initially. The response so successful, nearly 1,600 additional shares were made available.

And members of 940, Brotherhood of Pulp, Sulfite and Paper Mill Workers and the **Packaging Division of Downingtown Paper** reached an agreement on a three-year contract, which called for improved medical benefits, life insurance for retirees, and four weeks vacation for employees with 25 years service or more. The union's negotiating team included Alfred Giannarino, James Ambroziak, William Eshleman, Augustus Farnum, Lester Kauffman, Elizabeth Lacey, Pauline Reburn and Donald Welsh.

Members of the **DHS girls' basketball team** who earned certificates and letters were Gayle Davis, Nancy Gindin, Paula Tweed, Barbara Thompson and manager Ruby Carr.

Uwchlan Township Republicans who filed petitions for the spring primary election included; Russell Miller and Charles Martin, supervisor; Harry Happersett and Mrs. Charles Trego, tax collector; Grace Gordon and David Sharp, auditor; Edith Oberholser, assessor; Jonathan Windle and Robert Devaney, judge of election; and Warren Supplee, school director.

It's Breesey Court in Downingtown



Bud Bruton was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify this as a photo (taken by Mike Dunn) of Breesey Court, 517 E. Lancaster Ave. in Downingtown.

Based on the history, provided by Richard and Hilda Donovan, the current owners, the house was built in 1909 for Mrs. Martha Curtin Breese, daughter of Andrew G. Curtin, Pennsylvania Governor during the Civil War. At the time, she was a widow with three grown children

After construction of the main house, a carriage house and a stable was completed, servants' quarters were added in 1913.

The 20-room house and its additions were designed by Wilson Eyre, an architectural firm in Philadelphia and New York. John Gilbert McIlvaine was a draftsman with the firm at the time. He became a partner and the firm was renamed Wilson Eyre and McIlvaine.

McIlvaine married Mrs. Breese's daughter, Elizabeth in 1912.

A member of a prominent Downingtown area family, McIlvaine was one of the founders and chief architect of the Chester County Boy Scout Council's Camp Horseshoe. And in 1920, he designed the original School Award Medal for the local Charles F. Moran American Legion Post. Downingtown's School Award Medal was adopted by the American Legion as a national program in 1926 to foster the ideals of citizenship and Americanism, and now it's given annually at thousands of schools across the United States.

In 1922, Mrs. Breese moved into the "Hat Rack," a smaller house designed by McIlvaine on an adjacent property, at 521 E. Lancaster Ave.

The Donovans bought the main house in 1979, and have converted it into apartments and an office suite. In 1991, they bought the Hat Rack, and it's now the location of Bruton Financial Partners.

Both properties are on the National Historic Registry

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Vol. 4, No.12

March 21, 2013

Where and What Is This?



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Downingtown area news in September 1945

Noted below are items from local newspapers, which attracted the attention of Downingtown area residents in September 1945.

The required number of borough citizens signed petitions, requesting that **movies could be shown in the Roosevelt Theatre on Sundays**. As a result, the issue would be on the ballot in the November election.

West Chester residents also were slated to vote on the same issue in November. However, a slim margin of voters in the county seat opposed movies on Sundays in an election several years ago.

Officers of the Hi-Y at **Mount Airy School** (whose enrollment was 33) Uwchlan Township were Charles Long, president; Robert Keesey, vice president; Dorothy Ingram, secretary; Anna Graybill, assistant secretary; and Anna Dinsdale, treasurer.

Leland Wilson, Jr., a graduate of DHS and Lehigh University, played an “important part” in the **development of the atomic bombs**, which were dropped in Japan several months ago.

Dr. Charles Chaffee, supervising principal of Downingtown School, reported that there were 491 students in the borough elementary schools and 560 in the Junior-Senior High School. He also noted that the cafeteria at the Junior-Senior High School had been open for the first time, and **285 hot lunches** were served.

The DHS Athletic Association decided not to host **night football games** this season because two opponents—Phoenixville and Eddystone—said they didn’t want their teams playing games under the lights. The association hoped the idea of night games would be more acceptable during the 1946 season.

Former vice president Arthur Glauner was elected president of the **Brandywine Building and Loan Association**, following the death of Joseph Miller, who had served as president for many years. Samuel McDonald, a director, was elected vice president, and Samuel Charles took Glauner’s seat on the board of directors.

Pfc. Samuel Hopkins, Whitford, was awarded a **Silver Star medal** for gallantry, after knocking out a machine gun nest and forcing 19 German soldiers to surrender in Germany, and Pfc. Edgar Draper, Lionville, received a **Bronze Star medal** for keeping communications intact during a Nazi bombardment in Belgium.

It was noted at the banquet of the recently formed **Downingtown Chamber of Commerce** that there were 182 jobs open in the borough, and two industrial firms were to start building new plants here in a few days.

Marshallton Girl Scouts who served as ushers at the Chester County Horse Show at Devon were Florence Johnson, Betty Keehn, Mabel Sellers, Jane and Helen Hall, Mary Wickersham, Doris McCarter and Edith Martin. They were accompanied by Mrs. Lewis Green and Mrs. Marshall Chambers.

The **Downingtown PTA** divided into organizations for each of the borough’s elementary schools. Officers of the **West Ward School Mothers Club** were Mrs. Charles Philips, president; Mrs. Francis Tweed, vice president; Mrs. Ed Towson, secretary; and Mrs. Herbert Ash, treasurer. Officers of the **East Ward Mothers Club** were Mrs. James Stauffer, president; Mrs. Russell Davis, vice president; Mrs. Newlin Moore, secretary; and Mrs. W.P. Canby, treasurer.

It's the Fetters-White School in Uwchlan



Rahn Brackin was the truly perceptive scholar who was the first person to correctly identify the building in the photo above, ca. 1900, as the Fetters-White School, near Worthington Road and Route 100 in Uwchlan Township. The photo below shows how the schoolhouse looks today. Both photos were provided by MaryLou Buchenauer of the Uwchlan Township Historical Commission.

The original schoolhouse, a 20-foot-square building, initially known as the White School because of its whitewashed stucco-over-stone exterior, opened in 1817.

Two Uwchlan churches, St. Paul's Lutheran and St. Paul's UCC, used the original schoolhouse for services in 1830s.

The current school was constructed nearby in 1863. It's namesake, Abraham Fetters, was a teacher there from 1850 to 1859. He created the township's first public school library, and added vocal music and concerts to the curriculum. Also, the school was the first in the area to have a student grading system.

According to an article in the *Main Line Today*, "Fetters later served as a captain during the Civil War, drilling his men on the streets of Lionville, before heading to Harrisburg" in 1862.

The school closed in 1918; reunions were held there until 1939. The building was a rental property from 1922 to 1998.

In 2002, the newly-established Abraham Fetters-White School Preservation Society

leased the property and began restoring the building, according to the Jan. 14, 2009 edition of the *Community Courier*. Spearheaded by Fran Pluchino and Frank Perina, the Preservation Society has replaced the building's roof, and added new windows and a septic system.

Owned by, and adjacent to, St. Paul UCC Church, the building is now used as a community meeting room.



The Fetters-White School in Uwchlan Township, as it looks today.

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Vol. 4, No.13

March 28, 2013

Where and What Is This?



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Lots of local school news in April 1961

Much of the information in local newspapers focused on the Downingtown school system in April 1961.

Numerous cracks were found in the exterior walls of **East Ward School**, according to an investigation by an architectural firm, hired by the Downingtown Joint Area Elementary School District. The firm's representatives also recommended that a drain line be installed around the exterior of the building and some sidewalks should be replaced. The board also restated its policy on retirement of professional employees, which is mandatory when they reach 65 years of age.

Several members of **DHS Tribunal** appeared on a TV program in Philadelphia, which discussed how law is taught in public schools. Local pupils who participated in the program aired on Channel 3 were: Carmelia Baxter, Thomas Yerkes, Anne Kalemjian, Joan Farra, Richard Supplee, Lewis Wilson, George Shoemaker, Charles Newlin, Georgia Wagner and John Rogers.

An article about musical activities at the high school, written by DHS pupil **Judy Jones** was published in an issue of "The School Musician," a national magazine for directors, teachers, students and parents.

The **pom pom girls**, portrayed in the DHS production of "Swinging High," were Barbara Noll, Bonnie Plank, Carol Shisler, Mia Kangas, Rose Kryzscho, Jane Vail, Donna Thompson and Pam Leach.

Downingtown elementary school students who participated in the chorus at the **Chester County Musical Festival** were Glen Baker, Parham Berryman, Mary Ann Brookover, Kathy Cann, Stephen Hendry, Jon Johnson, Cheryl Miller, Francis Parson, Donna Peterman, Catherine Rogers and Stephen Shirk.

Award winners at the Downingtown-Chester Valley **Future Farmers of America's** annual banquet were Walter Jankowski, star farmer; Andy Reneth, star green hand; Bob Ruark, dairy farming; Jack Stone and Newell Burdick, farm mechanics; and Edgar Donnon, public speaking.

Paul Miller was named the outstanding back and **Earl Wells** was the best lineman when the DHS football team was honored by St. Anthony's Lodge at its fourth annual banquet.

Officers elected to lead the one-year-old **DHS Band Fathers** group were Charles Seibert, president; William Ash, vice president; Newton Thompson, treasurer; and A.L. Anderson, secretary.

Although **Bill Pollock** won three events—low hurdles, 220 and broad jump—the DHS track team lost to Conestoga 63-54.

Whippet southpaw **John Snyder** twirled a two-hitter and Bob French had three hits and four RBIs as DHS won its Ches-Mont opener by blasting Conshohocken 12-0.

Other local news

Newly elected officers of the Downingtown branch of the **Chester County Hospital Ladies Auxiliary** were Mrs. Lewis Riddell, president; Mrs. Allen Powell, vice president;

Anna McL. Miller, recording secretary; Mrs. Allison Hallowell, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Weldon Bicking, treasurer.

Uwchlan Township's supervisors decided to buy the **old Lionville School**, and use it as a township hall.

Wallace Township's plan to build a new grandstand and a parking area at Glen Moore Park. It's now known as **Wagonseller Park** because James Wagonseller donated the land for it ca. 1900.

"To the Victor" is the first dramatic production put on by **The Hilltoppers** drama group at Hopewell Methodist Church. Members of the cast were Rev. Donald and Joyce Bower, Arnold Kring, Nicky Anderson, Millicent and Eleanor Krapf, Dick Weiler, Peter Smith, Dickey Watts and Beverly Laird.

Elected officers of the **Downingtown Junior Woman's Club** were Theresa Sciarretta, president; Mrs. Mark Bareford, first vice president; Mrs. Robert Kaster, second vice president; Carmalene Farnum, recording secretary; Mrs. Edward Foreman, corresponding secretary; and Mrs. Ray Kipp, treasurer.

Quonset hut was at Green St. and Jefferson Ave.



Gregg Nelms is the truly perceptive scholar, who was the first of many people to correctly identify the photo above as the Quonset hut at Green Street and Jefferson Avenue in Downingtown. It's now the site of Green Street Mews, a row of 30 townhouses with two-car garages, built on a flood plain several years ago (See photo below). The hut was occupied by C. E. Stauffer Heating & Cooling for many years, according to Victor Taraschi. And an alcohol and drug treatment center for troubled teenagers was located there in the late 1970s.

What the site looks like now



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Please check out the P3 website: www.dwestpostprom.com for more details and to sign up as a volunteer.

Savings opportunities available at DARC

Discount Movie Tickets: \$7.50, cash only. Honored at all Regal Entertainment Group locations (Regal Cinemas, United Artists Theatres, and Edwards Theatres). Valid for all show times. There may be a \$2.50 surcharge for the first 12 days of select films or a \$2.50 surcharge for IMAX Giant Screen Theatres.

For more info/complete price list on these opportunities and upcoming programs, go to the DARC website www.darcinfo.com, or 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 very reasonable. Call 610-269-3555 for more information.

Joseph's People, Downingtown Chapter

An ecumenical support mission to help un/underemployed people; run entirely by volunteers. We have been at St. Joseph's since 1995. Meets 7:30 PM on the 2nd & 4th Tues. of the month. All are welcome. Visit web page, www.josephspeople.org 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: JPCheryl@verizon.net.

Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. If you want to make a comment, add your email address to the sign-up box on the home page of our website. We won't share or sell any email addresses. Or if you want your email address deleted from the list, send an email to:

Info@downingtowntareahistoricalociety.org.

