



Downingtown Area Historical Society *History Notes*

Interesting bits of Downingtown area history

July 11, 2019

Volume 2, Issue 13

We're Taking Our Ball and Going Home!

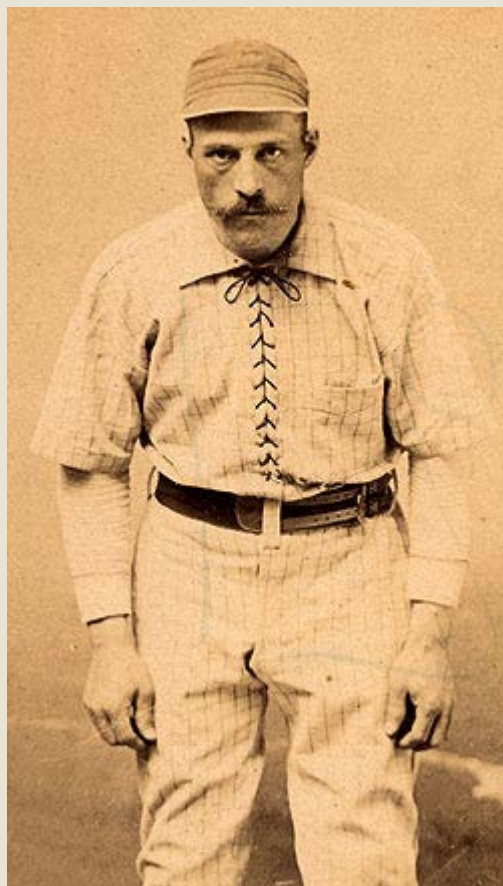
On Saturday, August 19, 1871, the Columbia (PA) "Blue Stockings" took a train east to play the Downingtown "Amateurs" in a base ball game (spelled as two words back then) at a field in Downingtown. The game began at 2:00 PM and the Amateurs were quickly overwhelmed by the much-better Blue Stockings. The team from Columbia proved to be "fine players, batting heavily and fielding sharply" and were at one point ahead of their opponents 19 to 0.

Despite the lopsided score, Downingtown felt they weren't out of the game and battled back. By the fifth inning Columbia's lead was cut to eight runs. But as the sixth inning was about to start, the Blue Stockings refused to take their positions, claiming they would miss the return train to Columbia if the game continued. The depot, however, was only a ten-minute walk from the playing field and there was still well over an hour before the train would arrive.

The Amateurs appealed to the umpire who ordered Columbia to renew the game. They still refused, so the game and ball was awarded to Downingtown. But Columbia's captain refused to relinquish the ball and the entire team left the field which caused a reporter to write that the "conduct of the visitors was anything but gentlemanly." The reporter summed up the situation by declaring "the 'Blues' expected a defeat, and in order to avoid it, acted cowardly and backed square out of the game."

Two weeks before their game with Columbia, Downingtown played the Millersville "Tecumseh" and won by a score of 22 to 9. Millersville, however, only had seven of their nine players on the field that day.

The Downingtown Amateurs, and the teams from Columbia and Millersville were among a number of 'base ball clubs' that were organized during this time, and played one another, often for money and bragging rights. Games were often played, not by a regular schedule, but through challenges to other clubs. Sometimes those challenges were posted in newspapers published in the opposing team's town. Other teams in this loosely knit group were the "Dauntless" from Harrisburg, the "Marions" of Philadelphia, and several teams from Lancaster City including the "Ivy", a team of druggists called the "Pill Pushers" (we didn't make that up!), and a team of grocers called the "Sugar Sellers."



Downingtown Did-You-Know?

Did you know that Abraham Lincoln stopped in Downingtown twice in one day?

The day was February 22, 1861 and Lincoln was on his way to Washington, DC for his first inauguration. For this leg of the trip, his train was going from Philadelphia to Harrisburg and needed to refuel with wood and water in Downingtown. A crowd had been waiting several hours and when the train arrived late that morning hundreds gathered around the platform of the last car and called for the President-Elect. Lincoln stepped out briefly and said a few words, but the train was soon on its way west.

Lincoln was going to stay in Harrisburg for the night and the following day go south through Baltimore and then into Washington, DC. However, credible threats were being made on his life over that route, so Lincoln was convinced by others that he needed to go through Baltimore another way. A plan was put into action where he would secretly take another train back to Philadelphia that evening and go through Baltimore via Wilmington in the middle of the night. Only a few trusted individuals were in on the plan. Everyone else believed he was asleep in Harrisburg during that time.

Lincoln was at a dinner in his honor at a Harrisburg hotel when the ruse began. Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin told the dinner crowd that Lincoln had a headache and needed to step out of the room. Lincoln and Curtin then proceeded down a hallway, out the front door of the hotel, and into a waiting carriage which quickly whisked them away. In the event anyone was watching, especially Southern spies, the carriage did proceed to the Governor's Mansion and made a brief stop. But no one got out. The carriage then went to a railroad grade crossing in a remote southern section of the City where a locomotive and single passenger car were waiting. Lincoln stepped out of the carriage and directly into the car followed by bodyguard Ward H. Lamon and several men with the Pennsylvania Railroad. No lights were on in the car, and even the train's engineer and fireman didn't know who was onboard.

After all the men were aboard, the train departed east for Philadelphia. Around 8 or 9 o'clock that evening the train made a stop for water in Downingtown. As the locomotive's water was being topped off the men, except for Lincoln, got off the train to get something to eat. They probably purchased the food from the Pennsylvania House Hotel which catered to railroad travelers. One of the men brought back "a cup of tea and a roll" for Lincoln.

The train arrived in Philadelphia an hour or so later and Lincoln was put into another carriage and taken to the depot for the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. He and Lamon quietly stepped into a compartment of a sleeping car. They were safely in Washington the next morning.



Downingtown Area From Above

Things look a bit different in Exton now than when this photograph was taken in 1970. The image faces north and most of the buildings shown here are long gone.



In The (Old) News – Items that Made Headlines Back in the Day

1867 – John R. Gordon of Uwchlan Township said that during the entire year of 1866 his two cows gave him 440 pounds of butter which was sold for \$230 wholesale. This allowed him two pounds per week for his own use.

1878 – George Widener of Upper Uwchlan Township has a cow that gave birth to twin calves this year and triplets the prior year.

1894 - William John of West Pikeland Township claims to have dehorned 928 head of cattle during the past season.

1898 – In June, a hired hand looking after a herd of cows owned by Samuel Roberts near Downingtown, grew impatient with one and threw a stone at it. The stone broke the leg of the cow and a veterinarian determined it would have to be killed. The “fine cow gave 20 quarts of milk per day, and was the best one of the place.”

1911 – During a thunderstorm in August, several cows on the farm of Morris Chambers near Sugars Bridge between Downingtown and West Chester were killed when struck by lightning. One of the cows had one of its eyes knocked out.

1940 – Three cows on the dairy farm managed by Paul Blend in Caln Township gave birth to twins on three successive days in April.


Downingtown Vintage Ad

The ad on the right was placed in the Downingtown Archive in 1948.

Our Famous
Oyster Stews
for **50c**
Instead of our usual 60c price

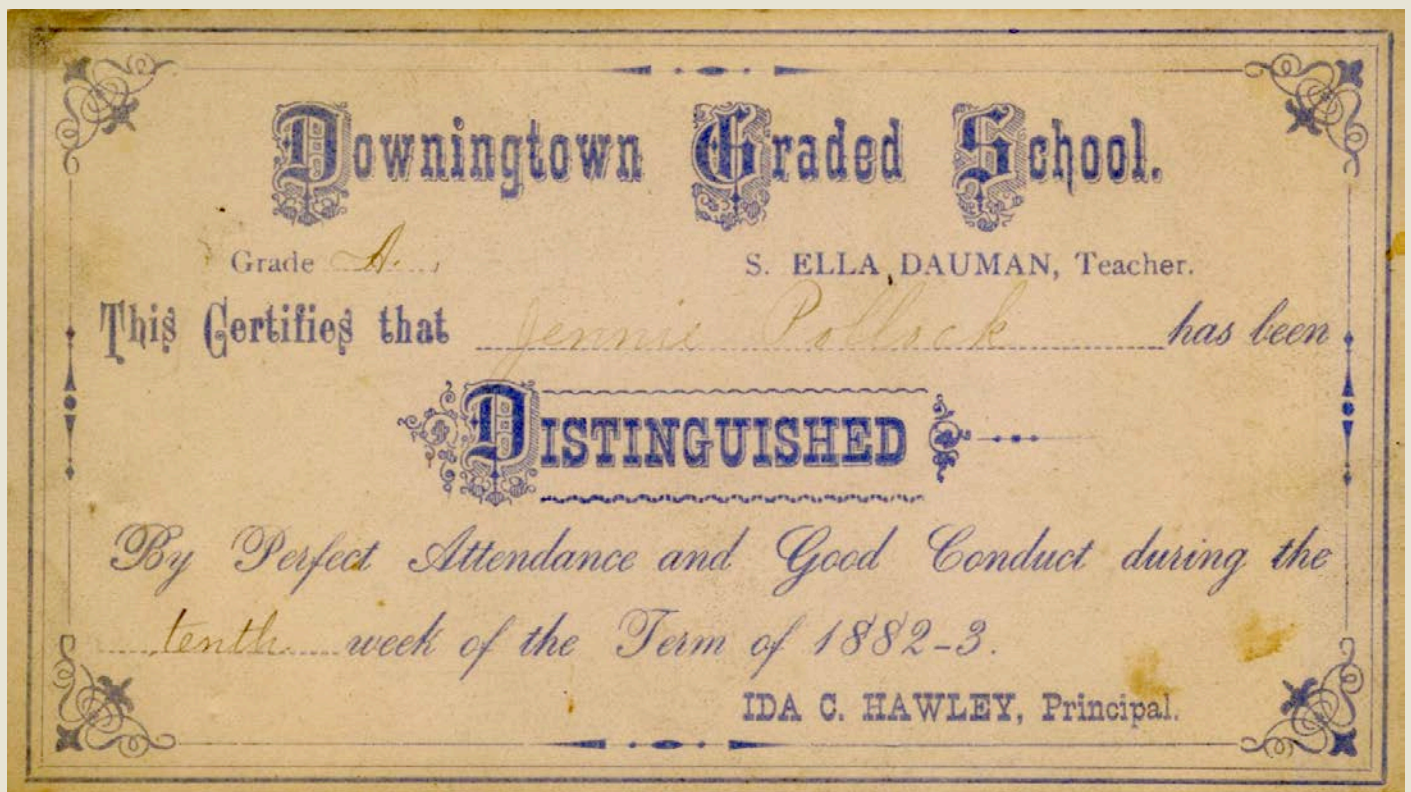
DOLLAR DAYS ONLY
Oct. 14th, 15th & 16th

Hess Oyster House
10 Wallace Avenue
DOWNINGTOWN, PA.



Ashbridge Artifact

Below is a certificate from the Downingtown Graded School for Jennie Pollock for Perfect Attendance and Good Conduct for the 1882-1883 school year. Jennie got an 'A'. Jennie was born in 1873 and was the daughter of John and Emily Pollock.

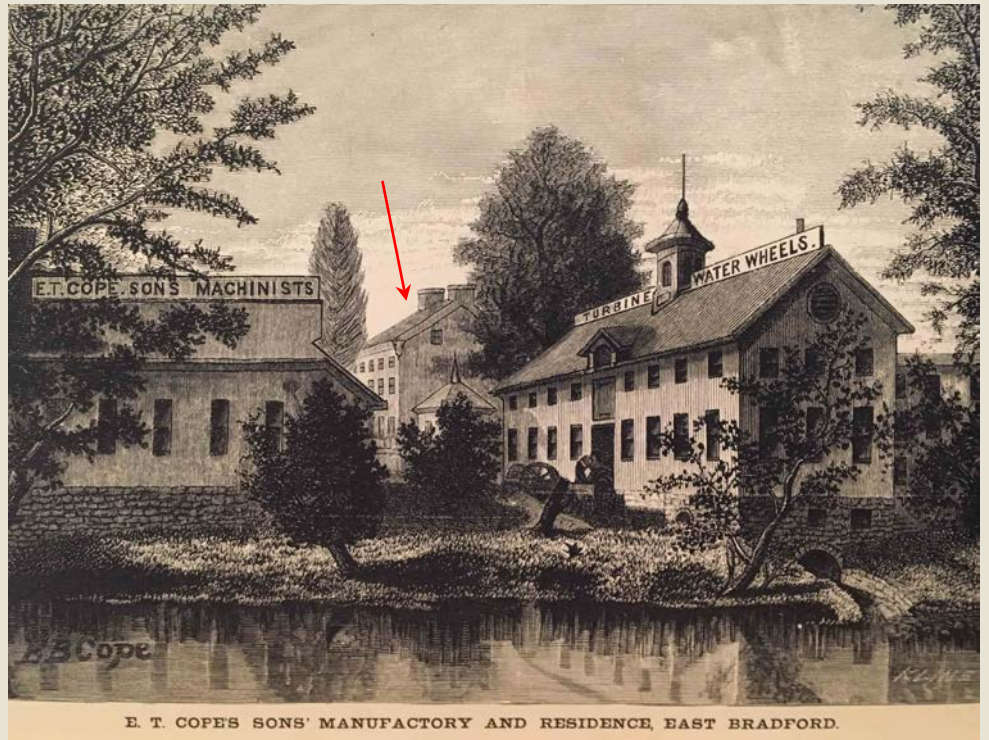


Last Issue's Mystery Pic

This is the first time in a long time no one has guessed the location of the Mystery Pic, probably because it's a bit further from Downingtown than some of our other Mystery Pics and because the home is hard to see from the road. But it still stands.

This was the home of Edge T. Cope who operated the Brandywine Machine Works along the East Branch Brandywine Creek starting in 1842 (right). The home is located by Cope's Bridge in East Bradford Township right on the border with West Bradford and lies on the north side of Strasburg Road at its intersection with Telegraph Road.

The home is all that remains in and around the Machine Works which peaked in the 1880s. The small factory buildings on the site turned out various products including mowers, water wheels, steam engines, and other machinery.



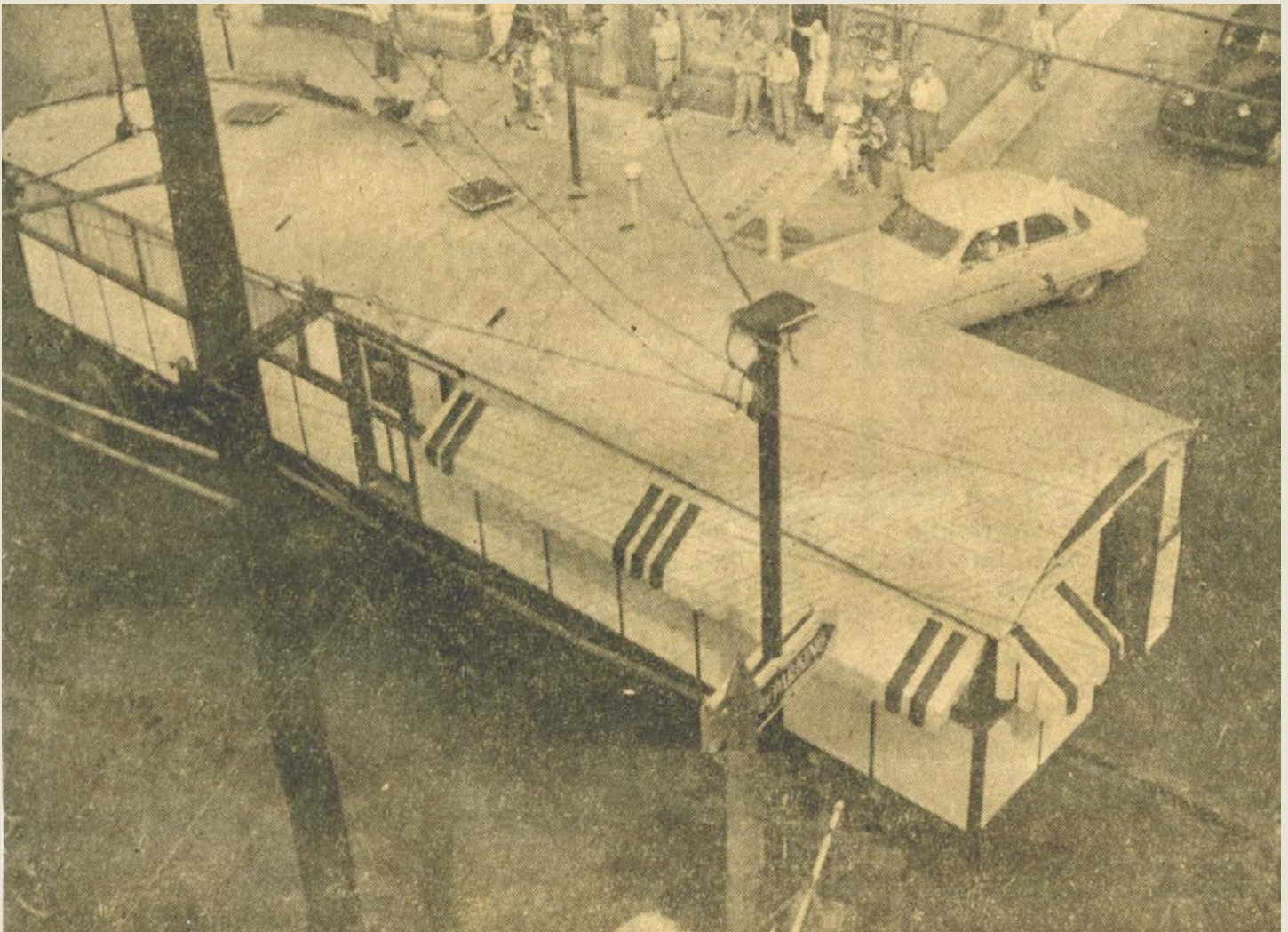
Downingtown – The Best Dining Place Along the Main Line

Before dining cars became common on trains, time was built into train schedules for dining off the train at designation “eating locations.” Trains would wait while the passengers ate. Downingtown was one of these, in particular the tavern of Harry Eicholtz next to the tracks. The short article at the right is from 1860 as it appeared in the Lancaster Intelligencer.

A CAPITAL DINING PLACE.—The Fast Line West, now leaving Philadelphia at 11.50 o'clock, A. M., stops for dinner at Downingtown. Passengers who may be desirous of supplying the wants of the “inner man” cannot be better suited, any where between Philadelphia and Pittsburg, than they can by our old friend, HARRY EICHHOLTZ, who knows so well how to get up the very best of dinners. We advise them by all means to give him a call, and judge for themselves. The very mention of his name in this city, where he is an old favorite, is a synonym of good living.

Downingtown Area Mystery Pic

A number of curious onlookers have gathered to watch something going on that was captured in the image below. The first person to correctly identify where this is and what this is will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your response to: dahs19335@gmail.com.



Advertisements for Non-Profits

West Caln Historical Society

The West Caln Historical Society will hold a meeting on Tuesday, July 16, 2019 at 7 P.M. in the West Caln Municipal Building, 721 West Kings Highway, Wagontown, PA on the subject of: **A Tenuous relationship: Abraham and Mary Lincoln.** The speaker will John M. Meicht, educator, historian, and veteran. The presentation will deal with the lives of two enigmatic and influential people in our history. Their lives are intertwined with love, tragedy and war. The meeting is free and open to all.

Marshallton United Methodist Church Chicken BBQ Dinner

The Marshallton United Methodist Church is hosting a Chicken BBQ Dinner on Saturday, July 27, 2019. The menu includes BBQ chicken, Cole slaw, corn on the cob, baked beans, roll & butter, dessert, and beverage. Hours for the "Eat-in" or "Take-out" option are from 4:30 to 6:30 pm. Cost is \$13/adult and \$5/child (5 to 12 years of age) if ordered before July 23 and \$15/\$5 at the door. The church is located at 1282 West Strasburg Road, West Chester, PA. Contact the church office at (610) 696-5247 or office@marshalltonchurch.org with any questions.

Fall 2019 East Brandywine Historical Commission Speakers Series. All programs are held at 3:30 p.m. at the East Brandywine Township Building

Sunday, September 15th - "Property Research in East Brandywine Township." The speaker is John E. Smith III, Assistant Archivist for Chester County Archives. Chester County Archives.

Sunday, October 20th - "Penn and the Lenape." The speaker is Doug Miller, Director of Pennsbury Manor – William and Hannah Penn's home.

Sunday, November 17th - "History of the American Flag." The speaker is Michael Rapp. Michael and his wife Jeanne owned Brandywine Flags from 1995"

Uwchlan Township Historical Commission

The Uwchlan Township Historical Commission will open the Edith P. Moore Schoolhouse (9 North Village Avenue, Lionville) and the John Cadwalader House (21 North Village Avenue, Lionville) on the first Sunday of each month, April through November. Hours for both are 2PM-4PM.

Lyme Disease Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania

The Lyme Disease Association of Southeastern Pennsylvania, an education and support group for patients and caregivers who have been affected by Lyme Disease, will meet Wednesday, April 17, 2019 at 7PM at the Kennett Friends Meeting House on PA Rt 82 (125 W. Sickie St., Kennett Square, PA 19348). This will be a special support meeting to answer your questions, share your experiences, and meet others who are battling Lyme Disease. Meetings are free and all are welcome. Check www.lymepa.org for directions.

Chester County Marine Corps League Detachment

BINGO on the first and third Saturday of every month, 420 Chestnut Street. Public welcome. Kitchen opens at 5:30, Bingo Cards on sale at 6:00, Early Bird Special 6:30. Food is available for purchase. Funds used by the Marine Corps League and Marine Corps League Ladies Auxiliary to help veterans from all branches of the service as well as others in the community.

Greater Downingtown Business and Professional Women (BPW)

Meets monthly on the 2nd Wednesday evening, at 6 pm, in the Thorndale Inn for a dinner, networking, program and meeting. All area women are welcome. Most nights there is a program such as a speaker. Call Cindy Markley for your reservation for dinner at 610-363-1404. We meet each month from September to June.

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.

Historical Society's Wish List

The Downingtown Area Historical Society is a non-profit organization proudly maintaining the 310-year-old Ashbridge House and a large archives. The society can always use gifts in kind with an immediate need for:

- General household items and office supplies including:
 - Pens and pencils
 - Scotch tape and masking tape
 - Copier paper (both color and white)
 - Light bulbs
 - Paper towels
 - Large and small trash bags
- Amazon gift cards or gift cards to Home Depot or Lowes. Sometimes we need to make quick purchases so gift cards would come in very handy.

To make a tax-deductible cash donation, use this link
or send a check to the address below. Thank you!



Downingtown Area Historical Society

P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335

610-269-1709

dths1709@gmail.com

<https://www.downingtownhistory.org>

Like us on Facebook:



Follow us on Twitter:



Check out our *Then & Now* series on YouTube:



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