



Downingtown Area Historical Society *History Notes*

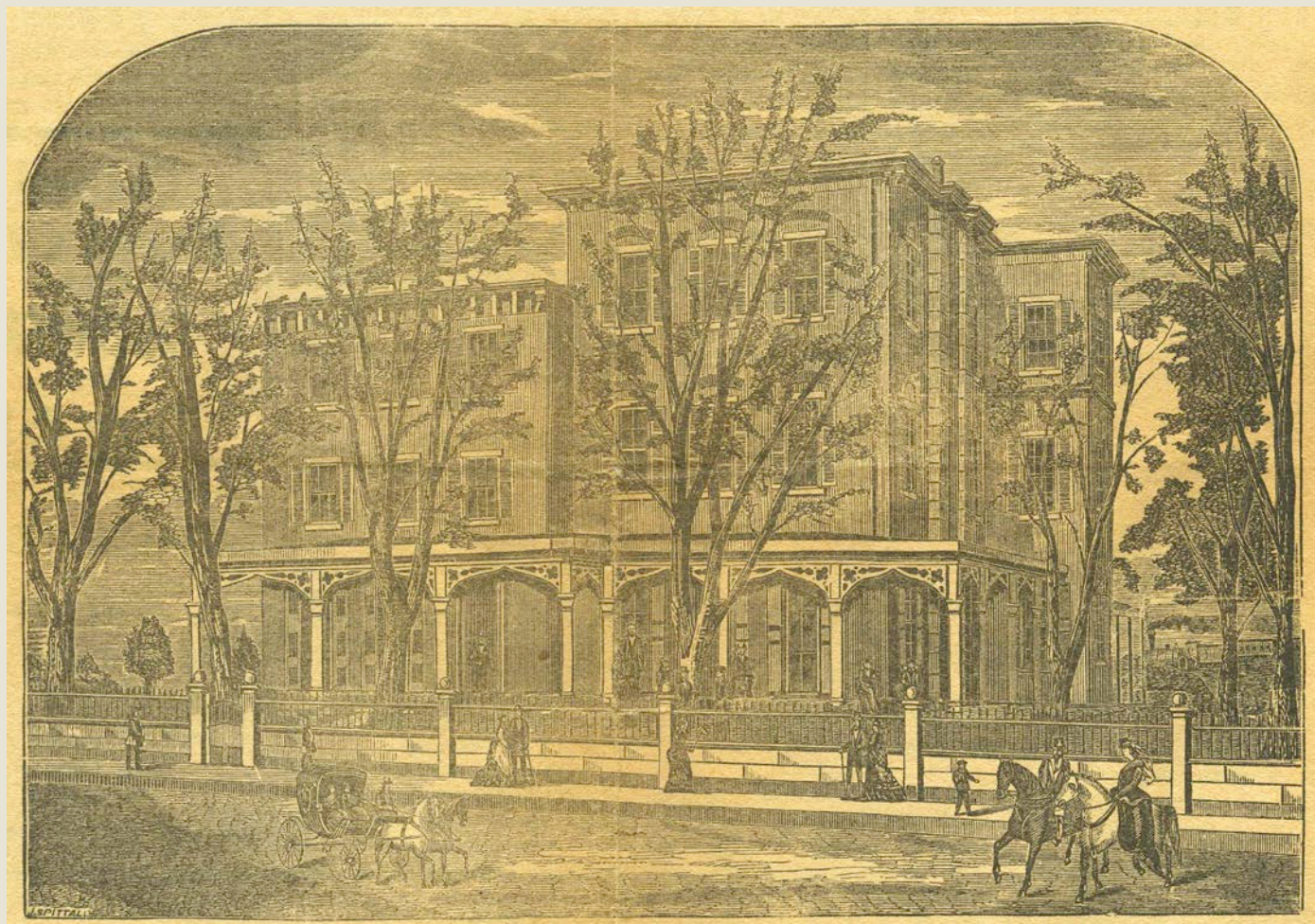
Interesting bits of Downingtown area history

November 28, 2019

Volume 2, Issue 22

The Heilbronn

One of Downingtown's long-lost grand buildings was The Heilbronn, a hotel located on the southwest corner of East Lancaster Avenue and Green Street. The building first started out as a home in the early 1800s. In 1820 it was owned at the time by John Parke but rented to the Jacob Downing family. Reverend Matthew Newkirk, the first pastor of the Central Presbyterian Church purchased the home in 1863 and lived there until around 1869 when he accepted the pastorate of a church in Philadelphia. The following year it was sold to F. Donleavy Long.



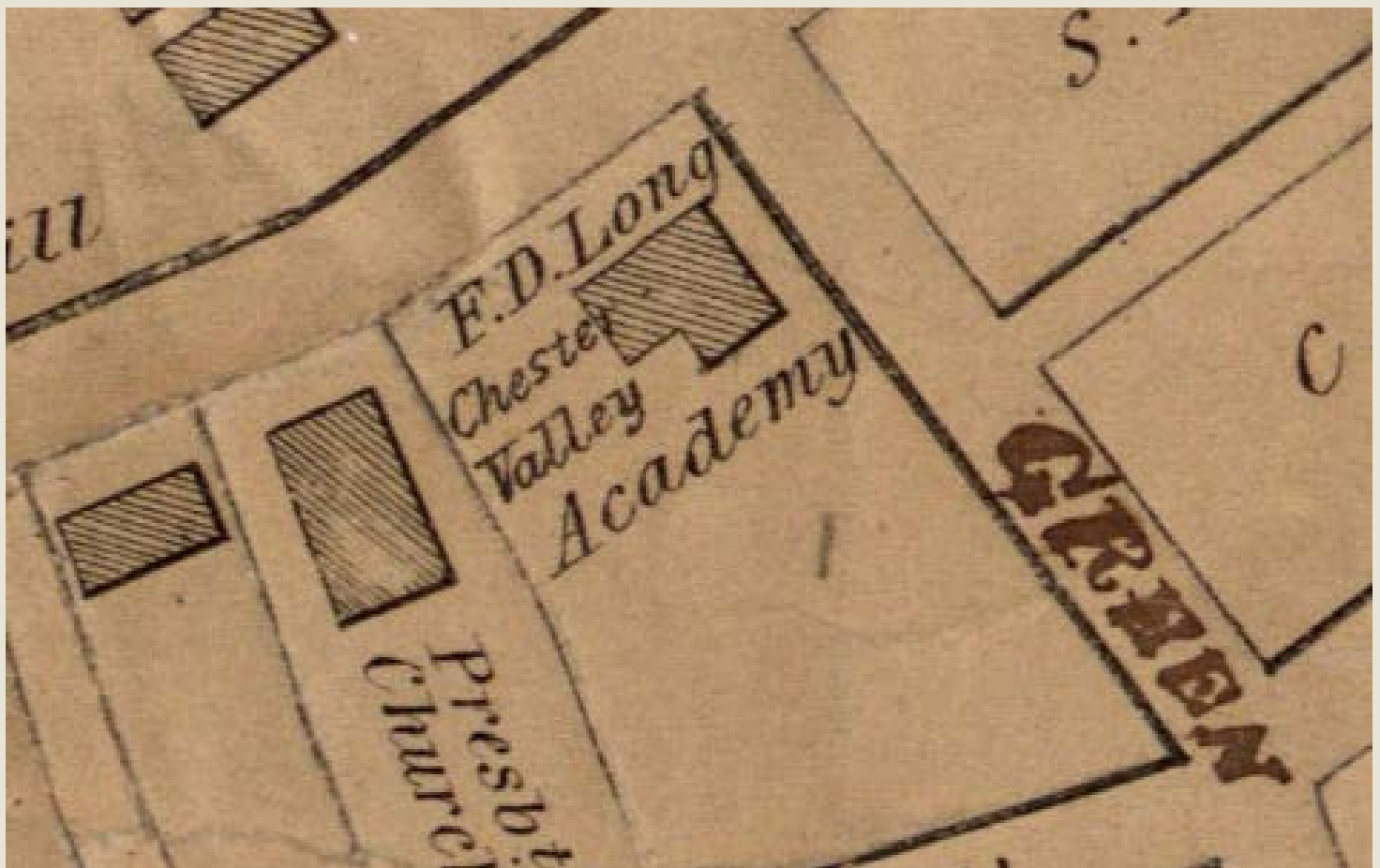
Above is The Heilbronn, a hotel that was on the corner of East Lancaster Avenue and Green Street.

In 1870, the year he purchased the home from Newkirk, Long established the Chester Valley Academy. The academy was located in what later became Downingtown's first library building on East Lancaster Avenue (just east of where McDonalds is now). However, the Academy soon moved across the street to Long's building which was enlarged and improved. The Academy was also a boarding school, and in the 1870 Census, twelve young men and boys between the ages of 14 and 19 were enumerated there.

About 1879, Long's wife Mary passed away. With the death of his wife, and a desire to pursue other interests, Long decided to lease the school to another principal. Henry M. Walradt took over the duties in 1884 but was not able to successfully continue the Academy. It closed in 1886.

Right is an 1882 newspaper advertisement for the Chester Valley Academy. The map below shows the academy on an 1871 map of Downingtown at the corner of Green Street and East Lancaster Avenue.

A HOME FOR THE BOYS.—CHESTER VALLEY ACADEMY, DOWNINGTOWN, PA.
An institute where boys receive a judicious christian training in preparation for College, Business or the Professions. The Principal and wife give their undivided attention to the instruction and comfort of the pupils. Backward boys encouraged and successfully advanced. Charges very low. Correspondence and visits solicited. Address, **F. DONLEVY LONG, A. M., Principal.**



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The 1870s and 1880s saw a proliferation of hotels along the Pennsylvania Railroad's Main Line. Many of them were marketed as summer retreats for Philadelphians looking to escape the heat of the city. After the Chester Valley Academy closed, the building was turned into a summer hotel called The Heilbronn. It was still owned by the Long family. Hotel rates at the time were advertised at \$2 to \$2.50 per day, \$6 to \$15 per week.

The building went up for sale in 1895, but after it was sold it most likely didn't continue much longer as a hotel. Theodore Griffith, owner of a hardware store in Downingtown, purchased the property in 1900 and it once again became a single-family home. It was at this time some of building's additions (ad-ons when it was a school and hotel) were torn down. The Griffith family moved out in 1927 and the Edward Towson family lived there until the mid-1930s. It was torn down in 1938.

Summer Resorts.


JAMESTOWN, R. I.
Summer Residences to let: One large house, 16 rooms, handsomely furnished; also, one medium-sized house, 10 rooms, well furnished.
Address, Mrs. John Howland, Jamestown, R. I.

THE HEILBRONN,
DOWNINGTOWN, Chester County, Pa.
First-class in all its appointments. Now open.
Address C. C. McCLELLAN, Proprietor.

ASBURY PARK, N. J.
For sale or rent for the season, East End Cottage, near the Ocean. 21 Rooms furnished. Apply
C. D. THUM, 150 NORTH THIRD STREET.

The above advertisement appeared in the Philadelphia Times in 1887. It lists the Heilbronn among other summer resorts. Below, the advertisement for the sale of the Heilbronn appeared in the Times in March 1895.

EAST DOWNINGTOWN, PA.

 **BARGAIN—HOTEL HEILBRON.—THIS** old established stand, situate in the healthful and beautiful Chester Valley, on the Pennsylvania Railroad, lighted with gas, electric bells, hot and cold water, excellent spring water, owing to the decease of the late owner, is now offered for sale low on easy terms with immediate possession. Apply to S. S. SIBBS, 233 North TENTH Street, Philadelphia. J. T. CARPENTER, East Downingtown.

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After it was torn down, the corner eventually became the site of an Esso Gas Station and after that a convenience store. More recently it was home to Foster Boy's Pizza and now Jad's Pizza.



The Heilbronn once again became a single-family home in 1900. It was torn down in 1938. The image above was taken some time in the 1930s. The site eventually became a gas station as seen below.



Luminaria Supplies

The holidays are fast approaching, and the Historical Society will again make it possible for people to be part of this Downingtown tradition by selling luminaria candles and bases. Orders can be made via our website at <https://www.downingtowndhistory.org/shop>, or you can email us the quantities you need to dths1709@gmail.com and bring a check or cash when you pick them up. Prices are:

- \$2.00 for a set which includes plastic base, candle, and bag
- \$1.00 for the plastic base only
- \$1.00 for the candle/bag only

Pickup of orders will be available at the Ashbridge House, our headquarters next to the Chick-Fil-A Restaurant on Route 30 in East Caln, on Sundays, December 8th, 15th, or 22nd. Email us if you have any questions or need different pickup times. It would be helpful to have orders by December 3, but we will try to accommodate later orders.



A Special Thank You!

The Board of Directors for the Downingtown Area Historical Society would like to publicly thank the *Spurlino Family Fund* for their recent generous gift to the Society.

Downingtown Area Group Photo

During World War II, a number of Downingtowners worked at Lukens Steel in Coatesville, including the women pictured below, who were employed in the company's offices on Strode Avenue. With gas rationing in place and with packed buses operating between the two towns, the five "car-shared" each day. The picture was taken in early 1943 and shows L to R: Phyllis Wilson, Marian Edwards, Evelyn McCombs (who owned the car), Rose DiBerardinis, and Florence Valucci.



Ashbridge Artifact

At the Ashbridge House there are several recessed “niche-like things” that measure about 14 inches tall by 12 inches wide. We are not sure what they were originally used for. They are in what were once two of the home’s bedrooms on the second floor. We’ve heard they could have been used to store spices, gunpowder, or perhaps other items that were meant to stay dry. If you have ever seen these in an older home or have any thoughts about what they were used for, please let us know. You can email us at dths1709@gmail.com.



Downingtown Vintage Ad

This advertisement for The Colonial apartments at West Lancaster and Gabel Avenues appeared in the April 29, 1964 issue of the Downingtown Archive.

A MEDALLION APARTMENT

PUTS CONVENIENCE IN YOUR FUTURE!



THE
COLONIAL

West Lancaster Avenue and Gabel Avenue
Downingtown



The Bronze Medallion, awarded by Philadelphia Electric Company, is a symbol of electrical comfort and convenience. It identifies an apartment that offers the benefits of electrical living and the assurance of a modern apartment today and tomorrow.

SAMPLE OPEN
Sat. & Sun., May 1 and 2
May 8 and 9
1 to 5 and 7 to 9 P. M.
Any time by appointment

A Medallion apartment is for now – and for the future – because it provides the utmost in convenience and comfort with modern wiring and lighting, and the latest labor-saving electrical appliances. Each apartment has an electric range with double oven, refrigerator-freezer, garbage disposal unit, and exhaust fan. The air-conditioned Colonial is completely carpeted with drapes throughout. There are floor to ceiling closets in the sound-controlled apartments and electric washer and clothes dryer facilities are available. For further information, call

HOOPES
Realtor

141 East Lancaster Avenue
Downingtown, Pennsylvania
Telephone 269-0140



PHILAD

Downingtown Then & Now (and last issue's Mystery Pic)

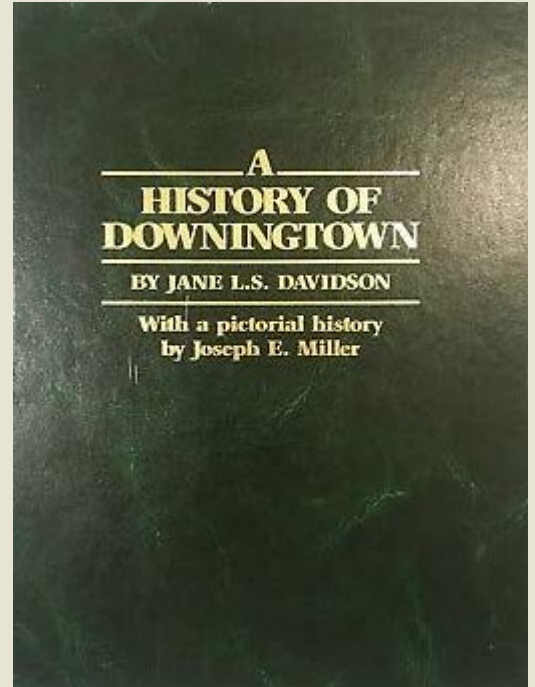
A recent Downingtown Then & Now, which we posted on Facebook and YouTube, compares an image taken of 130 and 132 East Lancaster Avenue and one taken from the same spot last year. We are not sure of the date of the older image, but it might have been in the 1970s when 130 East Lancaster (on the right) was subject to a “modern” transformation. This building was also the Mystery Pic from our last issue with **Anna Ezra** being the first to guess it. The “Then & Now” series can be seen on YouTube by clicking here: [Then & Now](#)



Downingtown Historical Commission Holiday Specials

Our friends at the Downingtown Historic Commission have several items for sale for the upcoming holidays...

The sale begins Monday November 25th and ends January 2nd. All items can be purchased at the Log House Santa event on December 7th from 10 AM to 2 PM. Or you can send an email to dtownhistoric@gmail.com to make arrangements for purchase at Borough Hall.



A History of Downingtown
by Jane L.S. Davidson - \$25
(regular price \$35)



Log House Mugs - \$8

Proceeds from sales of the mug and book support the general up-keep of the Log House. T-shirt sales support the placement of the Civil War "Minquas Cannon" at the Veterans Memorial in Kerr Park. Restoration of the cannon, which for many years stood outside the Minquas Fire Station, was the first phase. Building the cannon's pedestal at the Memorial is the second phase. The third and final phase will be an event to place the cannon and plaques of Civil War Soldiers, including our Marine Medal of Honor recipient Pinkerton Vaughn, at the Veterans Memorial.



Log House T-shirts - \$15
(regular price \$20)

An Out of Town Bad Boy

The following article appeared in the *Downingtown Archive* on January 28, 1943. Sometimes it's better to "cut and paste" an article rather than summarize it which might not do it justice.

Coatesville Citizen Meets Trouble Aplenty Here in Downingtown

Jack Van Kleef, a reputed hard boiled gent, hailing from Coatesville took a little pleasure jaunt to this burg one day last week, in company with a woman.

Parking his car in the West End, near Hunt avenue, he spied a couple of women on the corner, and discarding his companion, endeavored to make a new conquest, but got no where fast, according to evidence forthcoming at a hearing at local police headquarters on Monday night.

Van Kleef, who is manager of the Coach and Four Inn at Coatesville was charged with disorderly conduct, and was fined \$10 and costs by Burgess Hamilton.

The women in the case, whose names are withheld claimed that Van Kleef insulted and cursed them in high class Coatesville underworld language.

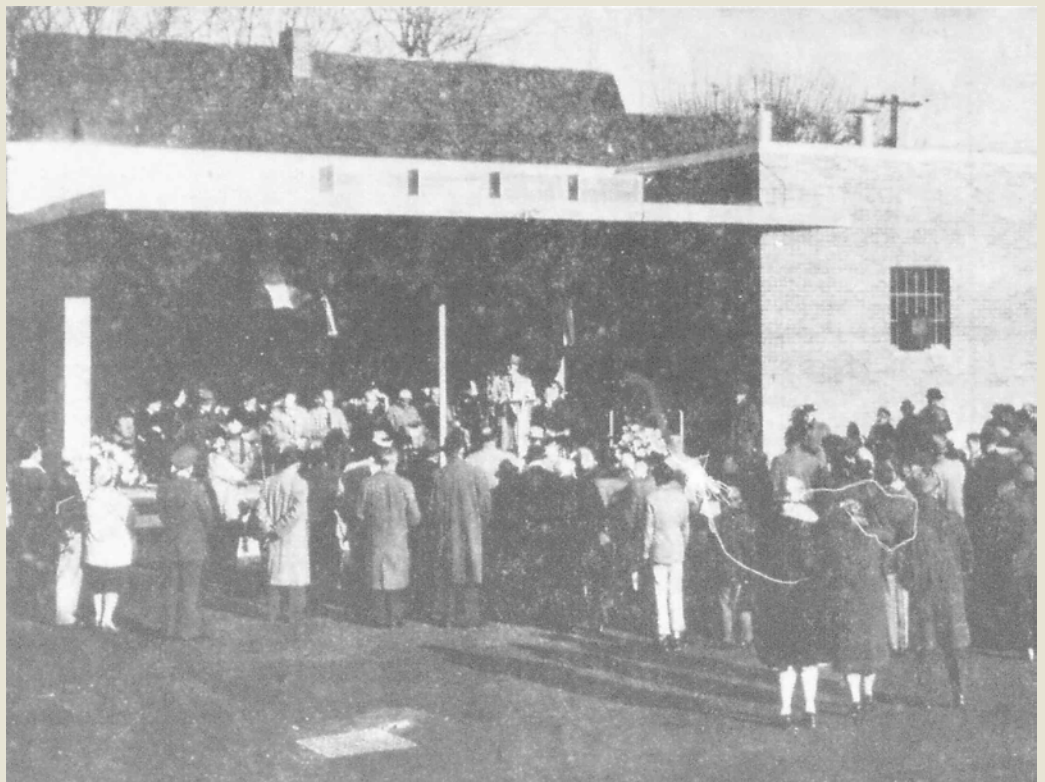
The affair with the cars license number was reported to the local police, and Chief Glisson went to work.

In addition to the disorderly conduct charge, Chief Glisson has reported the little matter of pleasure driving to the ration board, with the probability Van Kleef will hereafter do his slumming on foot.

Anyhow out of town bad boys should know better than to stage their misdeeds in Downingtown, where law and order is upheld by a most efficient police force, whose motto is behave or else.

Downingtown Area Mystery Pic

The quality is not the best, but can you identify the location of this photograph? The first person to correctly identify the location of this photo will be recognized as a truly perceptive scholar. Please send your response to: dahs19335@gmail.com.



Advertisements for Non-Profits

East Brandywine Historical Commission Speakers Series – Special Event – Saturday, December 8, at 3:30 PM, East Brandywine Township Building

"Angel at Philadelphia: William Still and the Underground Railroad." Between 1830 and 1863 nearly 9,000 runaway slaves escaped to freedom using southeastern Pennsylvania's Underground Railroad, a clandestine network of abolitionists. William Still, a free black Philadelphian, directed this so-called "Eastern Line" maintaining an extensive network of communication with those who opened their homes to fugitives, providing food, shelter and clothing. This talk examines the history and operation of the Underground Railroad's Eastern Line, as well as the findings of Dr. Kashatus' (the speaker) recent statistical study of the 995 runaways Still interviewed, which challenges the existing historiography of the Underground Railroad.

Christmas in Marshallton

As Christmas approaches, keep the Village of Marshallton in mind. On Saturday, December 7, 2016 starting at 9:00 am, the festivities will begin at Marshallton United Methodist Church. Homemade cookies and crafts will be for sale in our Fellowship Hall. At 11:30 am join us for a free Community Soup and Sandwich lunch. Live music will be featured all morning in the Sanctuary. The day concludes at 4:00 pm with the Tree Lighting at Martin's Tavern. Hope to see you there!

Glen Moore Methodist Cookie Sale and Craft Bazaar

December 7, 2019, 10-2. Glen Moore Methodist, Creek Rd, Glenmoore. Cookies sold by the pound, light lunch available AND crafts and gifts to astound. Join us in beautiful Downtown Glenmoore.

Central Presbyterian Church Community Luncheon

Central Presbyterian Church, 100 W Uwchlan Ave, Downingtown, PA 19335, holds a monthly Community Luncheon on the first Thursday of each month, October through May from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Their ever-popular chili, chicken corn noodle, vegetable beef, and cream of potato soups are sold along with sandwiches, salad platters, homemade desserts and beverages. Gluten free options are available. For take out service, call 610-269-1576 and ask for the kitchen. Bring a friend, meet a neighbor, or come alone and enjoy good food and fellowship.

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 on the following dates in 2020: January 15, April 15, June 17, and October 21. Meetings are at the Kennett Friends Meeting House on PA Rt 82 (125 W. Sickel St., Kennett Square, PA 19348). 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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