



Downingtown Area Historical Society *History Notes*

Interesting bits of Downingtown area history

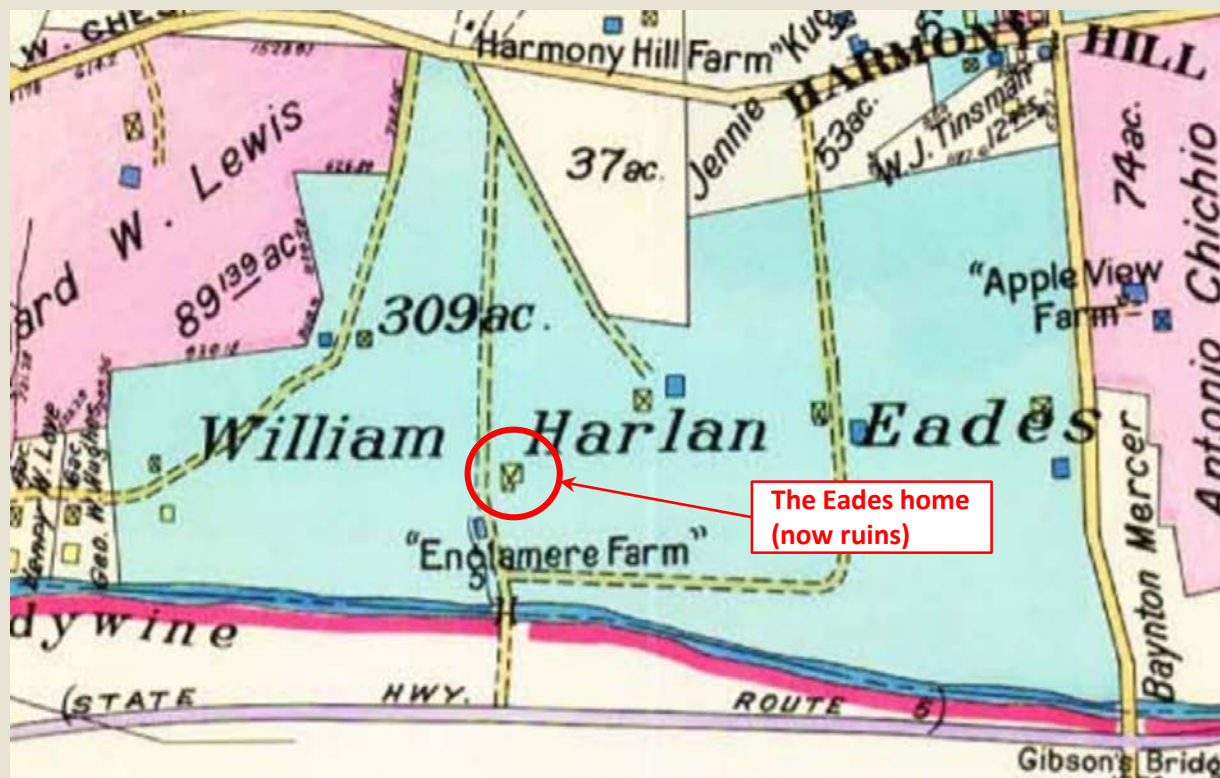
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The Ruins On Englamere Farm

On a number of occasions, the Historical Society has been asked about unique stone ruins in the woods off the East Branch Brandywine Trail in the Harmony Hill Nature Area of East Bradford Township. The ruins are easily accessible along the "Yellow Trail" which branches off the paved trail a few yards north of the bridge over the Brandywine River.

The ruins were the home of William and Persis Eades. They purchased the home and its 309 acres from Benjamin Lippincott in 1927, the year after they were married (it was the second marriage for both). George Kerr, after which Kerr Park is named, was an owner prior to Lippincott. The Eades' called the farm "Englamere." The home pre-dates their ownership of the property and was probably constructed in the late 1800s. However, it is quite likely the Eades' enlarged or made significant improvements to the home and the surrounding landscape. In addition to the Eades' home, there were several other smaller houses and a number of outbuildings on Englamere. One of the other home's ruins is also located on the Yellow Trail right before reaching the old Eades home. This home, and the other homes on Englamere, were probably rented to the farm's laborers.



This 1933 map shows the 309-acre farm of William Eades in East Bradford Township (Eades' middle name was Harold, not Harlan). It was situated west of Harmony Hill Road between Skelp Level Road and Route 322.

William Eades was born in England in 1895 and was a British veteran of the First World War. He came to America in 1925 with his daughter Emily (born in 1922) from his previous marriage. Eades married Persis Burnham Furbush in 1926. She was the widow of Charles Lincoln Furbush, former director of Philadelphia's Department of Public Health with whom she had a daughter named Lydia (Persis was also the granddaughter of George Burnham, former president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works; and daughter of William Burnham, former president of Standard Steel Works). Persis was a member of St. James Episcopal Church in Downingtown. She died at Englamere in 1946. William remarried in 1948 to Honora Ganoe and they lived on the farm until 1953 when they sold it to the East Caln Realty Company. After selling Englamere, William and Honora spent the winter months in Florida and summered in Bar Harbor, Maine (William and Persis also summered in Bar Harbor but lived most of the year – when they weren't traveling – at Englamere). Honora Eades died in Florida in 1962. William Eades died at Bar Harbor in 1970.

The photograph on the right (courtesy of the Hagley Museum) shows the bridge to the Eades' farm Englamere. It crossed the Brandywine River at the same place of the current bridge for the East Branch Brandywine Trail (below).



When Persis was still living, the Eades' traveled a lot and were part of Main Line society. As such, William was probably more of a "gentleman farmer" rather than working the land himself. Most of the farm work was probably carried out by laborers who lived on the property. A 1937 aerial photograph shows most of the property under cultivation. Orchards appear to dominate the northern half of the tract near the Eades home, but other crops, perhaps wheat or corn, look to have been grown in the southern half closer to Harmony Hill Road. A large herd of sheep was also known to have grazed along both sides of the Brandywine at Englamere. About a quarter of the tract at the time was forested. After Eades sold the property in 1953, nature slowly took back the farm. Today, except for some areas of residential development, nearly all the former Englamere farm is forested.



Persis and William Eades (left), and Persis' daughter Lydia Furbush (right) are seen here dressed up for a "Circus Party" at the home of friends at Wynnewood on New Year's Eve 1937. Source: The Philadelphia Inquirer

The home's ruins are quite fascinating, especially the long stone foundation wall on the west side and the two walls jutting perpendicular to it on the north side. Holes for second floor support beams can be seen on the long west wall and part of this wall still has stucco attached to it. On the east side of the ruins is a low u-shaped wall that may have been part of a terrace. The home's long driveway started from what is now Route 322, crossed a bridge over the Brandywine, then up to the house where it split. To the right the driveway went directly to the house where it appears a garage was attached the home's ground level. To the left the driveway went up the west side of the home to another entrance, then continued all the way to Skelp Level Road. During the time the Eades' lived at Englamere, they would have had a clear view from their home down to the Brandywine and beyond.



This image shows the west wall of the former Eades home. In some places stucco is still attached to this wall, and a number of holes that once held the second floors support beams are visible. These current photos were taken by Callie Sundman.

When the East Caln Realty Company purchased the property in 1953 they rented out the main house. It burned down later in the 1950s. In 1967, the realty company sold the property to the Downingtown Paper Company which used some of the land along Skelp Level Road to dump sludge from the paper-making process. In 2005, East Bradford Township acquired the site from Sonoco, Downingtown Paper's successor.



These exterior steps connected the two driveway levels.

So, if you get a chance, take advantage of the great trail system in the Harmony Hill Nature Area to see the former Englamere farm, especially the Eades' house ruins. Other building ruins can be seen along the trails too and are much more visible during the late fall and winter months. Also, one of the connector trails that runs west from the former Eades home is on top of an old earthen pond dam built by the paper company.



Some of the walls of the ruins truly impressive. It's fun to imagine what the former Eades home looked like.

The West Chester-Downingtown trolley also ran through the property parallel to the Brandywine River. The paved East Branch Brandywine Trail runs on much of the old trolley line between Skelp Level Road to a point about one-quarter mile west of Harmony Hill Road. The trail beyond this point veers slightly north of the old trolley bed, which can still be seen, especially during the late fall and winter months. Small bridges were built for the trolley to cross streams that flowed from the higher elevations of Englamere Farm into the Brandywine. Stone abutments for these trolley bridges are also still visible. Again, late fall and winter are particularly good times to see all these features as the leaves in the spring and summer tend to obscure them.

Right now, we can only use our imagination as to what home looked like. It's entirely possible a photograph of the former home exists somewhere. If any of our older readers remembers the home please let us know. Or, if you have any insights on particular features of the home, or any general thoughts about the ruins, it would be great to hear from you. Email us at dths1709@gmail.com. At some point we would like to do a follow-up article.



This image faces east. The area is thickly wooded now but when the Eades' lived here they could see all the way down to the Brandywine River and even beyond.



Along with the ruins of the Eades home, numerous other ruins can be spotted throughout Harmony Hill Nature Area, which was the former Englamere Farm. These are abutments for a small bridge that carried the West Chester-Downingtown trolley over a stream that flowed from the property's higher elevations into the Brandywine.

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

1918 – On July 8, under a headline reading “ON TRAIL OF MEAN PICNICKERS,” an article stated that officials were “seeking several Downingtown men who are alleged to have committed mean depredations at the home of Miss Anna Mary Williams, of West Bradford, after she had given them permission to hold a picnic in her meadow along the Brandywine. The men went to the Williams farm, overturned all the chicken coops into a road, breaking them to pieces, and took all the eggs from beneath a sitting turkey hen.”

1926 – According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, “Howard S. Kinsey of Downingtown, Pa., who claims that he is the world’s champion speller, and has issued a defy to other claimants of the title.”

1931 – During a period in October, a 120-pound locally-grown pumpkin was on display at the Exton Post Office along the Lincoln Highway.

1938 – In December, George Perry, a former Downingtown High School athlete traveled 600 miles just to watch the annual Downingtown-Coatesville football game. Perry took a plane from Richmond, Virginia to Camden, New Jersey, then took a train to Coatesville. He returned the same way. Downingtown beat Coatesville that year 13-7.

1978 – During the early morning hours of October 11, Larry’s Steak Shop at 135 East Lancaster Avenue was broken into. The burglars took about \$300 in cash, food, stereo speakers, and a karate sword.

Downingtown Area Group Photo



This group photo was taken in 1984 when Green Street was opened from Mill Alley to Pennsylvania Avenue. We don't have the names of the people shown but you certainly might know a few (please let us know if you do). Also check out the old Fotomat kiosk in the background!

Downingtown Vintage Ad

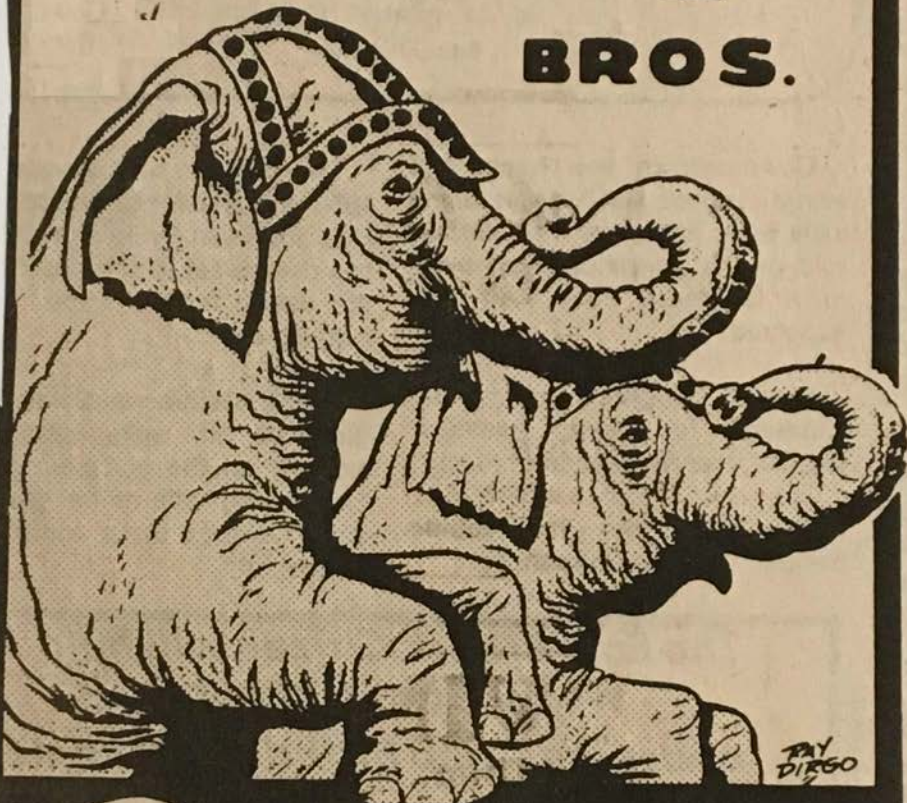
Do you remember going to the Hoxie Brothers Circus when it came to Downingtown? This ad was from 1978 when they performed on the old G.O. Carlson lot at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania and Wallace Avenues, where Wawa is now located.

Hoxie Brothers Circus began in the early 1940s but their best years were in the 1960s and 1970s when they traveled to small and medium-sized towns, mostly in the northeastern United States. Hoxie Brothers was one of the last circuses in America to perform under a tent.

DOWNINGTOWN
FRI. JULY 21

G.O. CARLSON LOT
Pennsylvania Avenue
Performances
6 p.m. and 8 p.m.
Sponsored by: Chesco Sertoma Club

★ **HOXIE** ★



BROS.

CIRCUS

POPULAR PRICES ★ ACRES OF TENTS | **100** MINUTES THRILLS • LAUGHS **100**

FOR CHOICE SEATS — COME EARLY
—NO RESERVED SEATS—

★ **SAVE** ADVANCE TICKETS AT REDUCED PRICES TICKETS ON SALE NOW **SAVE** ★

DOWNING CENTER
H & L Cleaners

EXTON MALL
Lowell's Leather

Downingtown Area Mystery Pic

Can you identify the location in the photograph below (hint – it's located somewhere east of the Borough of Downingtown)? 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.



Last Issue's Mystery Pic

Last issue's Mystery Pic shows the old bridge that crossed the Brandywine River to Englamere Farm which was mentioned earlier. We didn't get any correct responses as to its location. The bridge could be seen when looking east from Route 322 a mile or so south of the Trestle Bridge. When the East Branch Brandywine Trail was built, this bridge and the abutments were taken down and a new bridge for the trail was built in its place.



Advertisements for Non-Profits

Marshallton United Methodist Church

The Marshallton United Methodist Church is hosting a Roast Beef Dinner on Saturday, October 20, 2018. The menu includes Roast Beef, Mushroom & Brown Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Cole Slaw, Applesauce, Rolls & Butter, Dessert, and Beverage. Hours for the "Eat-in" or "Take-out" option are from 4:30 to 6:30 pm. Ticket prices: If ordered before 10/17/18: \$13/adult and \$5/child (ages 5~12) At the door: \$15/adult and \$5/child (ages 5~12). Please contact the church by phone or email to order your tickets on or before 10/17/2018. 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.

Downingtown Fire Department

The Downingtown Fire Department will be hosting the Annual DFD Fire Prevention Open House on Wednesday, October 10, 2018, from 6:30 to 9:00 PM. This Open House will take place at both stations - Alert Fire Co. No. 1 on W. Pennsylvania Ave. and Minquas Fire Co. No. 2 on Wallace Ave.

Fall 2018 East Brandywine Historical Commission Speakers Series. All programs are held at 3:30 p.m. at the East Brandywine Township Building

Sunday, October 21st - "John Hershey's Vision" presentation by Dale Hendricks, a self described "itinerant preacher on ecology and trees who tries to communicate new ideas, bring the young folks along, and have a little fun." He is the owner of Green Light Plants in Landenberg.

Sunday, November 18th - "Historic 1700's Pennsylvania Cooking" presentation by Nancy Bialy Daversa who has worked as a historic consultant for movies and television show, and has been called the "Hollywood Herbalist."

Community Luncheon

Central Presbyterian Church, 100 W Uwchlan Ave, Downingtown, holds a monthly Community Luncheon from 11 AM until 1 PM on the first Thursday of each month, October through May. Their popular chili, chicken corn noodle, vegetable beef, and cream of potato soups are sold, along with sandwiches, salad platters, homemade desserts and beverages. 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.

Uwchlan Township Historical Commission

The Uwchlan Township Historical Commission will open the Edith P. Moore schoolhouse on the first Sunday of the month from May to November. The hours are 2pm-4pm. The schoolhouse is located on North Village Avenue in Lionville.

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, meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at 7PM 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 and programs.

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.

The Ashbridge House will be closed on September 30th, but please stop by our table at the Downingtown Fall Fest that day, 11am-4pm.

Clipping Events

Did you know that as part of our archival collection we have about 14,000 cards in our files that contain newspaper clippings? During most months there are two opportunities at the Historical Society to help clip and paste newspaper articles for this collection. The sessions are held at the Ashbridge House, our 309-year-old headquarters, next to the Chick-Fil-A restaurant in the Ashbridge Square Shopping Center on Route 30 in East Caln. The two sessions are usually:

- **The first Sunday of the month, 1:00-4:00 PM**
Next one October 7th @ 1:00 PM
 - **The first Tuesday of the month, 6:30-8:00 PM (with pizza!)**
Next one October 2nd @ 6:30 PM
-

Historical Society's Wish List

The Downingtown Area Historical Society is a non-profit organization proudly maintaining the 309-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:
 - Light bulbs
 - Paper towels
 - Large and small trash bags
 - Glue sticks (used for our newspaper clippings)
- 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

www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org

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Follow us on Twitter:



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



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