

# Downingtown Area Historical Society's Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 1

January 4, 2011

## News about Downingtown area people in January 1950

This is what people in the Downingtown area were talking about 60 years ago, according to *The Archive*, a local weekly newspaper:

Officers of the Ursula Cotta class at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lionville, were: Mrs. James Thackery, president; Grace Gordon, vice president; Mrs. Gilbert Smedley, secretary; Mrs. Percy Yoos, treasurer.

Promotions at the Downingtown Paper Co. included: Joe Formica, from laborer to millwright helper, and Frank Pendergrast, from sheet boy to fourth hand. And Carl Beam, Sewell Rowe, Matthew Menna, Gerald Lyons and Charles Thomas were promoted from extras to plant helpers. Also, Ralph Kinsey was named assistant purchasing agent, and Dorothy McCombs was the new switchboard operator, replacing Barbara Ax, who became a clerk in Purchasing.

Winners at the Glen Moore Fire Co. card and game party were Owen Fitzgerald, 500; Mrs. Bruce Ritchey, pinochle; and Ralph Hannum, bingo.

Hayes Clark hosted 300 friends at his annual deer dinner at the Eagle Hotel.

In Downingtown Community Basketball League action, Dick Dague and Floyd Lilley each scored 13 points as the East End team beat the American Legion 65-31. And Mutt Menna was the high scorer, with 20 points, as Downingtown Paper Co. beat St. Anthony's 62-52.

Dale Ellingsworth, Robert McCue, Charles Brooks, Ralph Hall, Harold Trimble, Malcolm Preston and Donald Lambert of Marshallton's Troop 52 enjoyed a hike to Harvey's Rocks.

DHS musicians Louise Bartelmo, clarinet; Joan Lenhart, cornet; Paul Miller bass horn; and Joseph Streamer, bass clarinet, were named to the Southeastern District School Band.

New officers of the Ever Ready Club, Downingtown, were: Mrs. Henrietta Warnick, president; Ella Miller, vice president; Mrs. Samella Miller, secretary; Mrs. Mary Van Ness, assistant secretary; Mrs. Arcadia Thomas, treasurer; Mrs. Levinia Henderson, assistant treasurer.

Creston Shoemaker headed the committee making plans for the new Moose Lodge to be built on West Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown, between Hunt and Stuart.

Linda Hadfield celebrated her seventh birthday at a party attended by Suzy Norris, Barbara Noll, Barbara Ellen Hadfield, Ann Taylor, Cookie Seibert, Mary Flaherty, Donna Peazonni, Jeannie Emery, Evelyn Eshleman and Eileen Moyer.

New officers of the Glen Moore Fire Co. were David Miller, president; Philip Kirtland, vice president; Charles Zeiders, secretary; Harold Ziserman, treasurer; Marvin Furlong, financial secretary. Trustees were Frank Styer, Joseph Sharp and Raymond MacDougall. Line officers were: Thomas Miller, chief; Barry Ortlip and David Miller, assistant chiefs. Ladies Auxiliary officers were: Marlene Miller, president; Lena Sassaman, vice president; Mary Ann Glisson, secretary; Esther McDougall, treasurer; and Jeannie MacDougall, chaplain.

## Addenda

Whoops! After reading our last (Dec. 29) Hist-O-Gram, Don Hannum of Wagontown brought it to our attention that the 1926 dedication of Downingtown's Borough Hall occurred 85 years ago, not 75 years ago.

And Don was wondering if the Lower Merion Reserves, who played the DHS football team on October 7, 1926, was the Main Line high school's second string players or a 1920s version of a Junior Varsity.

By the way, what happened to the Downingtown Community Basketball League, which is noted above? Wonder why it why folded?

*Hist-O-Grams are emailed weekly to members and friends of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. Please pass our Hist-O-Grams on to your friends and family. Comments should be sent to: [Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org).*

## **Reminder**

You all are invited to come to our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue (next to Chick-Fil-A) in East Caln to participate in a newspaper clipping session Sunday afternoon, Jan. 9. Participants can join the monthly clipping session at any time between 1 PM and 4 PM. Clippers of all ages are asked to bring their own scissors to clip articles about local people, institutions and issues from area newspapers we've been collecting, so they can be added to our archival collection.

If you have any questions about the sessions, don't hesitate to contact Carol Grigson, our archivist, at 610-269-5413.

# Downingtown Area Historical Society's Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 2

January 11, 2011

## Life in the Downingtown area in 1975

News reported in the January 1975 issues of the *East Branch Citizen*, a weekly newspaper covering the Downingtown area, included:

The possibility of reestablishing a police department in West Bradford was to be discussed at a meeting in the township building. The meeting was in response to a rash of burglaries in the Crestmont Farms section of the township.

Bradford Shuman, personnel manager of Pepperidge Farms, was elected president of the Chester County Industrial Relations Association.

The Women's Association of Central Presbyterian Church recently elected the following officers: Judith Wade, secretary; Olive Konick, treasurer; Miriam Bicking, Circle 2 leader; Anne Pearson, Circle 4 leader; Vivian Piersol, fellowship chairman; Judith Bullock, nominating committee; Lois Thatcher, Presbyterian Home secretary.

Recent property transfers included: 3 Independence Ln., East Brandywine, \$45,180; 416 Devon Dr., Uwchlan, \$52,000; 1530 Waimea Dr., West Bradford, \$36,700; 706 E. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown, \$32,000; 423 Fairfax Rd., Uwchlan, \$47,000; 62 Lightfoot Dr., Uwchlan, \$61,100.

Donald Spahn was installed as president of the Uwchlan Civic Assn. Other officers were: Clementine Woods, vice president; Dorothy Trotter, treasurer, and Gerry Milham, secretary.

Gilbert Algier, Paul McCombs and William Woodward were elected trustees at Downingtown United Methodist Church.

Jack Hoopes, Downingtown, was installed as president of the Chester County Board of Realtors.

Elected officers of the Junior High School Youth Fellowship at First Baptist Church, Downingtown, were Ken Thompson, president; Jim Jameson, vice president, and Sandy Burns, secretary-treasurer. Officers of the Senior High group were Star Akin, president; Cindy Rimes, vice president; and Jim Meadow, secretary-treasurer.

New officers of the United Methodist Women at Marshallton United Methodist Church were Judy Howarth, president; Jane Hill, secretary, and Mil Wickersham, treasurer.

Recently elected officers of the Alert Fire Co., Downingtown, were: Leslie Sheeler, president; William Keene, vice president; William Wilmot, secretary; Richard Myers, treasurer; William Barrett, Harold Trego, Richard Nields and Richard Keers, trustees. Line officers were Alfred Peterman, assistant chief; Richard Keers, captain; Robert Stevens, David Capuito and Wes Pannebaker, lieutenants.

John Bonham and Robert Carmichael were elected chairman and vice chairman, respectively, at Hopewell United Methodist Church.

New officers of the East Brandywine Fire Co. were: John Piersol, president; Harold Thompson, vice president; Ronald Rambo, secretary; Lewis Laird, Treasurer. Trustees were Charles Thompson, Walter Crandall and Robert Zynn. Dr. Brent Follweiler was the new chief.

West Bradford Fire Co. elected to the following officers: William Hill, president; James Andrien, vice president; Frank Bates, secretary; Gary Schmidt, treasurer. Elected as directors were: Kenneth Trimble, William Dilworth, Jack Hines, Charles Entrees, Ann Matthews, Larry Amoriello and Thomas McGrady.

DHS musicians Mike Shaughnessy, Missy Turner, Lori Hummel, Mark McClure and Steve Rowan were named to the Lower Southeastern District Band.

Marshallton United Methodist, East Brandywine Baptist, Hopewell United Methodist, Central Presbyterian, Thorndale United Methodist, plus the Downingtown 3 (comprised of players from St. James Episcopal, Downingtown United Methodist and Uwchlan Friends Meeting) are teams in the Downingtown Youth Church Basketball League, under the direction of Arnie Sten.

Cheryl Wojtowicz, Shadyside Road, West Bradford, was named Pennsylvania Angus Queen at the State Farm Show.

**Addenda** When Bob Stevens contacted me last week about sending Hist-O-Grams to his email address, he noted that our first Hist-O-Gram (Oct. 15, 2010) on the founding of the Downingtown Little League brought back memories.

In his email, Bob wrote about the Little League field: "My father (Morris) was an electrician and he did the installation, wiring and hookup for the scoreboard. I was ten years old at the time, and I was taught how to dig a trench from the backstop out to the scoreboard. Without saying, my dad did a lot more of the digging than I did."

# Downingtown Area Historical Society's Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 3

January 18, 2011

## First DHS marching band was formed in 1928

The original copy of the photo of the first DHS band, we used in the Jan. 11 Hist-O-Gram, was incorrectly dated on the back. The band was formed in 1928, not 1925, according to Brent Lewis, band director at Downingtown East HS.

For more information on the band, Brent also directed us to the 1929 Cuckoo, the name of the DHS yearbook until the mid-1950s. That 82-year-old yearbook noted how frustrating it was for DHS students back then, when they saw and heard the high school bands from Coatesville and West Chester play at football games and in parades.

“Not only did they make a fine appearance, but they produced music that caused their schools to be justly proud of them,” added the DHS yearbook editors about the neighboring school bands. “This was all a ‘bitter pill’ for our school, especially when DHS had champion football teams, glee clubs and typists.”

The band’s 33 members practiced twice weekly. They needed that practice because most of them “had never specialized in playing of their instruments. They are beginners—not only in band work—but in actual study of each instrument.

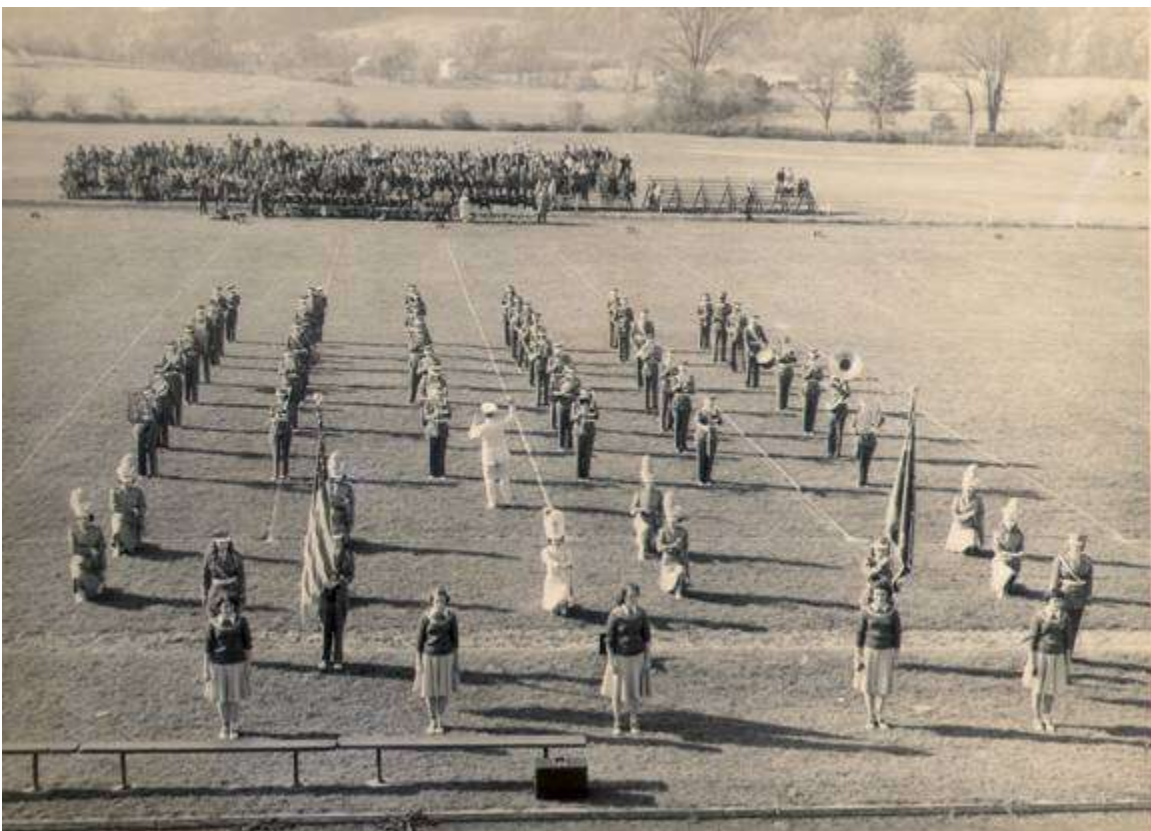
Sporting new uniforms, the band’s first public performance was as part of the festivities before a DHS baseball game in the spring of 1928.

Establishment of the band was a major undertaking at DHS, when you realize that its officers were: A.B. Moyer, president as well as superintendent of schools; Ruth A. Shumway, secretary as well as music teacher; Ernest Smedley, treasurer as well as president of the school board; and Amos Miley, manager and director.

If you have more info about or photos of the band’s early days, please send them to [info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org). And we’re still looking for an old (20<sup>th</sup> Century) uniform.

Under the co-direction of Brent Lewis and Douglas Bennett (DHS West director), this year’s Blue & Gold Marching Band, comprised of 300+ musicians from Downingtown High School East & West campuses, played on New Year’s Day in the Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, CA. The band also played in the 2001 Tournament of Roses Parade. Over the past 20 years, the band has been featured in the Orange Bowl Parade, two Indianapolis 500 Festival Parades, two Orlando Citrus Parades, the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade, six Miss America Pageant Parades and the Boscov’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in Philadelphia.

This photo below shows the DHS marching band, comprised of 61 members, during the 1948 football season. Beyond the visiting school’s bleachers on the north side of what is now known as DiSerafino Stadium, the photo shows all farmland because the original DHS West building was not built until 1960.



The DHS marching band in the fall of 1948.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society's Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 4

January 25, 2011

## **When local veterans, who fought in the Civil War, held a reunion in Downingtown in 1902**

Downingtown's Gen. Winfield Scott Hancock Post 255 of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) hosted the 18<sup>th</sup> annual reunion of the Pennsylvania Volunteers of the 124<sup>th</sup> Regiment, which was held in the borough on September 17, 1902.

One of the reasons why the reunion was held in Downingtown was because many of the Civil War veterans in the Hancock Post 255 had served with the 124th Regiment, which included seven companies from Pennsylvania. One of those units was Company A, which was formed in Downingtown in August 1862. The company was comprised of 100 men from Chester County, who signed up for a nine-month stint. Senior Captain Joseph Hawley, a native of Lionville, was their commander.

After assembling at the railroad station on West Lancaster Avenue in Downingtown on August 8, 1862, Company A's recruits boarded a train for Camp Curtin in Harrisburg, where they expected to begin their training before facing their Confederate enemy. Shortly after training had begun, however, the regiment was transferred to the Washington, DC, area on August 12. The regiment ultimately became part of the Army of the Potomac, fighting in two major battles—Antietam and Chancellorsville—before being ordered back to Harrisburg, where the unit was mustered out on May 16, 1863.

The regiment's losses included one officer and 17 enlisted men who were killed or mortally wounded; 36 enlisted men died from diseases. Some of the men subsequently fought in other Civil War battles after they joined other Union units.

Many other Chester County men, including a large number from the Downingtown area, also fought in the Civil War. And we'll be reporting on their exploits in future Hist-O-Grams.

The 1902 reunion must have been a success because it included a dinner at the Pennsylvania House hotel, opposite the railroad station, where 267 Civil War veterans and friends were served.

The reunion meetings were to be held in the GAR hall, above the Downingtown Post Office, at the corner of Stuart and West Lancaster Avenues. Due to the large turnout, however, they had to be switched to the nearby Odd Fellows Hall.

Rev. T.G. Eiswald, pastor of the Downingtown Baptist Church, was the first speaker. One of the interesting remarks in his welcoming address was, "I can say that we have the fairest women here, if you don't place them in too strong light."

More inspiring was Joseph W. Hawley, former Company A commander and presiding officer of the regimental veterans' group. He said, "Many incidents the day we met here are still plain in my memory. One was an act of kindness of Mr. Ashbridge, who belonged to a religious organization opposed to war. Still, he felt kindly towards my boys and asked those who had enlisted from the township of Whiteland to step to the front (so) he might see them. Then, passing down the line, he presented each of them with a \$5 note. How sorry we were not all from his home," added Hawley.

"A father of one of the boys was standing on the (Pennsylvania House) hotel porch when we were marching by, and looking with pride on his boy (became) angered by a loafing, cowardly fellow who said, 'look at those Lincoln hirelings and nigger worshippers.'

"The words were scarcely out of his mouth when the father said, 'One of those boys is my son,' and accompanying the words with a blow from his fist, landed the fellow in the middle of the street. And if Sheriff Heffelfinger had not interfered, there would have been an undertaker needed."

In conclusion, Hawley said, "Many changes have taken place since then. The loving parents who sadly bid us adieu on that day—and who so gladly welcomed us back, those of us who have returned—have passed away. And we, who were but boys then, have whiter heads, showing that time is leaving its mark on us. And

each year it is our solemn duty to record the death of many of our members. But, as this is a day of pleasure, I will not dwell on the sad side of life, but will introduce those who have so kindly offered to address us.”

Information about the regimental reunion in 1902 in Downingtown was found in the *History of the 124<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteers in the War of Rebellion, 1862-63*, compiled by Robert M. Green and published in 1907 by Wade Brothers Co., Philadelphia. And information about Company A’s battle experiences was found in the five-volume *History of Pennsylvania Volunteers, 1861-65*, authored by Samuel P. Bates and published by the state in 1869.

*The Historical Society’s archival collection includes a ledger, listing data on members of Hancock Post 255. The local GAR post was dissolved in the mid-1920s because there were few surviving Civil War veterans in Downingtown at the time. Perhaps some Downingtown area residents have some Civil War and GAR documents, photos and other memorabilia they can donate to us.*

## **Addenda**

The photo of the 1928 DHS marching band in the Jan. 18 Hist-O-Gram “was of great interest to me since Amos Miley, the first director, was my grandfather.....Also, several of the members of the band at that time were three of his daughters, my Aunts Ada, Mary and Carrie Miley. Thanks so much,” wrote Joan Miley Stanford of Elverson in an email.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society's Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 5

February 2, 2011

## Why a loaf of bread cost just 19 cents in 1952

Sebastian "Busty" Ruffini, life-long resident of the Johnsontown section of Downingtown, recently showed us documents that detailed the "ceiling prices" he and his partners--Herbie Talucci and Anthony "Keene" Viscichini--were allowed to charge at the Food Center, a grocery store they operated in the 1950s at the corner of Church Street and Bradford Avenue in the borough.

The ceiling price program was established in 1951 by the federal Office of Price Stabilization (OPS), to control prices during the Korean War, which had begun in June 1950. Cold War fears of a major conflict with the Soviet Union and still-fresh memories of rationing programs during World War II led to massive hoarding and panic buying by consumers and manufacturers. By the end of September 1950, government figures showed that prices for 28 commodities had increased by 25 percent since the beginning of the war. The program was hampered throughout its existence by continuous debate over the appropriate level of governmental economic control required for an undeclared war. The program was shut down in April 1953, several months before the Korean Conflict ended.

Ceiling prices charged at the Food Center and other Philadelphia area grocery stores in 1952 included:

Bond bread, 1-lb. loaf, 19 cents  
Campbell chicken noodle soup, 10.5. oz. can, 20 cents  
Crisco shortening, 3 lb., 91 cents  
Gold Medal flour, 5-lb bag, 62 cents  
Heinz white distilled vinegar, 1 qt., 24 cents  
Kellogg's Rice Krispies, 9.5 oz. box, 30 cents  
Kraft's mayonnaise, 1 qt. jar, 79 cents  
Kraft's Phila. Cream cheese, 8 oz., 47 cents  
Land-O-Lakes butter, 1-lb, 86 cents  
Log Cabin syrup, 12 oz., 30 cents  
Maxwell House coffee, 1-lb., \$1.01  
Morton salt, 26 oz., 13 cents  
Peter Pan peanut butter, 14 oz., 49 cents  
San Giorgio macaroni, 16 oz., 21 cents  
Welch grape jelly, 16 oz., 29 cents

Rationing and price controls were not unique to the Korean Conflict era. We'd love to hear about how Downingtown area folks dealt with those issues during World War II.

## Response

Linda Broomell Draper of Downingtown commented in an email that she "especially liked" last week's Hist-O-Gram about the Civil War veterans' reunion in the borough in 1902 because she lived in the Pennsylvania House Apartments from 1949 to 1955. The apartment house was known as the Pennsylvania House Hotel, before World War II.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society's Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 6

February 10, 2011

## ***The Cuckoo* started chirping at DHS in 1919**

When Downingtown High School students launched *The Cuckoo* in February 1919, the publication was considered a school newspaper. But that concept changed over the years.

Initially, *The Cuckoo's* dimensions—roughly 9 inches by 6 inches—made the 36-page publication with a soft cover appear to be a pamphlet. Based on editorial staff comments in the first issue, the publication's size and content apparently was the norm for high school newspapers about 90 years ago.

The first edition included news articles on athletic teams, the Literary Society, dedication of a new school flag, and organizing girls' and boys' glee clubs and a Camera Club. It also had short stories, jokes, cartoons, a listing of the military branches in which recent alumni were serving during World War I, and editorials.

One of the introductory issue's editorials politely asked about the possibility of having a gym, as neighboring high schools did. Back then, the DHS boys' and girls' basketball teams played home games on the second floor of the Minquas Fire Co. on East Lancaster Avenue.

*(Typical of the times, the Minquas court was enveloped by chicken wire so unruly fans couldn't hit the "cagers" (as basketball players still are occasionally called in the press) with projectiles. This rarely was a problem at the high school level, but the cage was used at the Minquas because adult leagues also played there.)*

Perhaps the editors weren't too aggressive about the gym issue because they had already pushed their luck by getting the high school administration to approve the student-journalists' proposal to name the publication *The Cuckoo*. Maybe the editors liked that name because the bird's arrival in England was considered the first sign of spring. Obviously, the school's administrators didn't know there had been a custom among British coal miners in the 19th-century to stop working when they heard the first cuckoo, claiming the day as a holiday, and went off to drink ale or beer, to welcome the bird. This custom was called "Wetting the Cuckoo."

Members of the editorial staff who published the first edition of *The Cuckoo* included: George Pannebaker, editor-in-chief; Emerson Glauner, business manager; Margaret Bray, associate editor; John Heffner, literary editor; Charles Fernald, athletic editor; Kathryn Hess, exchange editor; Anna Long, alumni editor; and John Powell, joke and class notes editor. Robert Taylor and Anna Rogers were the faculty advisors.

*The Cuckoo's* content slowly evolved into a yearbook. That inevitability became clear when photographs were first used in the Commencement Edition in 1922. There were individual photos of the 32 graduating seniors, and below each of them was a quote from literature and a brief write-up that attempted to evoke their personalities and character traits. Also cited was their involvement in extra-curricular activities. That issue also included photos of the boys' and girls' basketball teams, and *The Cuckoo* staff.

We don't have copies of *The Cuckoo*, published between 1923 and 1928, in our archives. However, later editions in our collection show that the yearbook's evolution continued. And in 1955, the yearbook's name was changed to "Our Year." A logical but uninspired title, compared to *The Cuckoo*.

If you want to donate any DHS yearbook to the Historical Society, call us at 610-269-8037 or contact us via [Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org).

## **A response from Lyndell**



When Elsie Sinex Tarr read the article in last week's Hist-O-Gram about the "ceiling prices" grocery stores were required to charge in 1952, she had her sister, Carol Sinex Schmidt, send us this photo. You can see the 1950s era prices charged at her parents' store in the background of the photo. That's Carol with her parents, Fran and Elsie Sinex, in the photo. The Sinexes operated the Lyndell Country Store from 1949 until the early 1980s. Built in 1835, it was reputed to be the nation's oldest general store in continuous operation. Since the village post office was in the store, Frank also was the village's postmaster for decades. He continued to operate the Frank's Folly campground for several years after he sold the store to Jim and Mary Ann Smyth in the early 1980s. One of Lyndell's residents was Jim Croce, who lived in an apartment in a 19<sup>th</sup> Century mansion on Highspire Road in the early 1970s. Croce was pictured on the cover of his first album, looking out the window of the outhouse on the mansion property. The eight-holer has been razed.

## Help us clip and paste

It was impossible to have our clipping and pasting sessions so far this year because of slippery weather conditions. But, since the newspaper articles that will be added to our archives continue to pile up, we'll begin catching up on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 13 at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays. The sessions will be between 1 PM and 4 PM, but you can come and go at any time that's convenient to you. Don't forget your scissors. Cookies and root beer will be served.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 7

February 16, 2011

## Downingtown area happenings 35 years ago

*(News items found in the February 1976 editions of the East Branch Citizen, a weekly newspaper published in the Downingtown area)*

James Ayers, Minquas Fire Co., and Richard Keers, Alert Fire Co., were honored as the Downingtown Fire Department's outstanding firefighters.

Robert Fетters, Upper Uwchlan, succeeded Joe Stampone, Downingtown, as president of the Chester County Constables Assn. Other officers included: Harry Shreiner, Uwchlan, vice president, and Betty Conner, secretary.

Jill Haynes won the Old East Ward School's spelling bee. Kim Otto was the runner-up.

DHS students who exhibited their works at Downingtown National Bank were: Tom Hall, Sharon Capriotti, Brenda Smith, Theresa DeMark, Ginger Beavers, Debbie Grigson, Wray Lutz, Linda Sellers, Eileen Murphy, Tim Ippolito and Laura Desilets.

Newly-elected officers of the Alert Fire Co. Auxiliary were: Mrs. Ralph Pacinelli, president; Mrs. Steven DiLuigi, vice president; Mrs. William Yocum, treasurer; Mrs. Joseph Brown, secretary; Mrs. Clifton Walton, financial secretary; and Mrs. Anna Hannum, chaplain.

New members of Lionville Community Methodist Church were: Chris and Mary Anne Jensen, Bill and Marydee Ogden, Bob and Bonnie Reed.

Recently baptized at Hopewell United Methodist Church were: Susan Elizabeth Ax, Margaret Michelle Lonaker, William Earl Neatherly, Danielle Lynne Drew and Damon Michael Drew.

Leaders of the Council of Ministries at Downingtown United Methodist Church were Walter Myers, lay leader and chairperson, and Marilyn Walter, president of the United Methodist Women.

Property sales: 1505 Waimea Dr., West Bradford, \$48,000; 19 Wyndham Ct., East Brandywine, \$35,500; 317 Mary St., Downingtown, \$31,000; 77 Jenkins Dr., East Caln, \$72,000; 420 Devon Dr., Uwchlan, \$51,000.

Jeff Martini and Steve Rowan, who have won several numerous honors for their musicianship, were to lead the DHS wind ensemble, which was chosen to play on the lawn of the White House in April.

Members of the Property Committee at First Baptist Church, Downingtown, were: Mrs. Leona Gabel, Everett Harrington, Vernon Jameson, George Meacham, Thomas Peazzoni, James Meadow and Olin Siever.

Members of Cub Pack 221, Lionville, who received the Arrow of Light award, were: John Foster, Bill Schmitt, Robbie Oakes, Bill Goldman, Bill Horan and Bob Henderlite. Al Foster was cubmaster and Ed Kirkbride was assistant cubmaster.

Walter Kottmeyer was named principal of Lionville Junior High, replacing Thomas Stoner, who will retire in June.

The rebuilt and augmented organ at Central Presbyterian Church was dedicated. Built and installed in 1926, the organ had been dismantled and stored when the church moved to a new facility on Uwchlan Avenue.

Members of the Woman's Community Club of Uwchlan who won first place ribbons in the club's Colonial Arts and Crafts Show are: Mrs. Douglas Whipple, Mrs. Martin Mars, Mrs. Jesse Moore, Mrs. Edward Burghart, Mrs. Harry Ebert, Mrs. Paul Tenhoopen, Mrs. William Edgerton, Mrs. E.L. Velte and Mrs. Glenwood Shreiner.

Michelle Conahan, Heidi Hornung, Christine Martini and Cathy Althouse scored in double figures as St. Joseph's girls' basketball team beat St. Norbert's of Paoli 44-14.

James Hart succeeded Joseph Bergan as president of the Uwchlan Ambulance Corps.

Edy Lyons and Chris Johnson were co-captains of the DHS girls' basketball team, which won the Ches-Mont League. Other members of the squad were: Janet Reed, Reese Sweeney, Sue North, Sandy Bireley, Sue Berry, Donna Dorsey, Deb Hegarty, Sharon Watson and Laurie Formica.

Members of the recently formed Junior Tennis Committee were: Mrs. William Steimer, Mrs. Joseph Potts, Mrs. William Rosenlieb, Eileen Moyer, Milt Hess, Mrs. George Carey and Mrs. Becky Desmond.

*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 our list, or have your email address deleted from the list, contact us at: [Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org). We won't share or sell email addresses.*

# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 8

February 23, 2011

## Glimpses of life in the Downingtown area in February 1925

Noted below are news items found in the February 1925 issues of *The Archive*, a weekly newspaper published in Downingtown.

Based on a survey of the 319 students in the Downingtown School System, here's a breakdown of their religious affiliations: Methodist, 114; Presbyterian, 68; Baptist, 46; Catholic, 42; Lutheran, 17; Friends, 7; Hebrew, 7; no affiliation, 7.

Local businesses represented at a four-day trade show, sponsored by the Charles F. Moran American Legion Post, at the Minquas Fire Co. were: William Snyder, Chester Valley Electric Co., Ellis Warren, Chandler Roberts, Downingtown Motor Co., T.M. Griffith & Son, American Stores, Herbert Cook, Snyder Brothers, Creston Shoemaker, Robert Moore, C.W. Walker, McGowan & Son, John Parke, C.C. Hutchison, Counties Gas Co. and Harry Worrall.

A new A&P store opened in the west end of the borough.

Members of The Patriotic Order of Sons of America's practicing to perform in a minstrel were: George Taylor and Raymond Greenleaf as end men; Paul Dague impersonating "a rube;" Horace Miller offering a song and dance; soloists Percy Windle and Talbert Swarner, and Norman will play the piano.

The Downingtown Rod and Gun Club planned to buy a "fliver" to transport members to and from a fishing ground near Ocean City, NJ. Members of the club were: James Glauner, Archie Baen, Frank Bicking, "Snorty" Chamberlain, Wilmer Johnson, Albert Walton, George Pannebaker and Grover Gregg.

## Recent donations to our archival collection

Here's a partial listing of many of the archival items donated to us in the last six months of 2010. We'll publish the rest of the 2010 acquisitions in a March Hist-O-Gram.

**Eleanor Plank** gave us 1937 DHS and Downingtown Elementary School diplomas; numerous Lions Club pins, certificates and photos; Coatesville YMCA and Central Presbyterian Church certificates; 1930s DHS yearbooks and a photo of East Caln's supervisors in the early 1970s, all of which belonged to **Mylin Plank**, her late husband.

**Kevin Kelly** brought in books on the American Revolution, and the history of Lititz, the Honey Brook area and *Early Chester County*.

**George Ciarlone** donated a 1915 photo of his family's residence and bakery in Johnstontown

**Parry Desmond** gave color photos of Chemical Leaman trucks and 1873 maps of Upper Uwchlan and West Bradford.

**Spencer Windle** donated several early 20th Century photos with family members pictured, plus the October 7, 1926 edition of *The Archive*, covering the dedication of the new borough hall.

**Dick Ash** sent us a copy of his book, *The Ash Families of Lancaster and Chester Counties*.

**Bud Bruton** donated newspapers covering Good Neighbor Day in 1980 and 1981, a 1957 copy of the DHS Blue and Gold newspaper, and blown up posters of the 1932 Junior-Senior High School and Class of 1960 classmates at the 2010 DHS West commencement.

**Don Greenleaf** brought us a 1964 study on the merits of East Caln merging with Downingtown, pens from the Brandywine S&L and NAIL, an insurance firm based in Downingtown in the 1970s, several glass banana split dishes and numerous bottle labels from Greenleaf's Drugstore.

**Paula Tweed Spang** donated scrapbooks full of clippings and photos from the late 1930 and early 1940s, when Francis Tweed, her father, was the winningest football coach in DHS history.

*We thank those who gave us these items, which have been added to our archival collection. Anyone who wishes to donate artifacts, photos, printed material and other items with a Downingtown connection should call Parry Desmond, 610-269-8037.*

**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 our list, or have your email address deleted from the list, contact us at: [Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org](mailto:Info@DowningtownAreaHistoricalSociety.org). We won't share or sell email addresses.**

# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 9

March 3, 2011

## Downingtown area news in March 1976

The following items were published in the *East Branch Citizen*, a weekly newspaper, in March 1976:

While many ambulance crews have problems providing service during the daytime when most male volunteers are at work, the Uwchlan Ambulance Corps is unique because 20 of its 45 responders are housewives.

Eight IBM electric typewriters, valued at a total of \$3,000, were stolen from the Downingtown School District's administrative office, which was then part of the DHS campus on Manor Avenue.

Members of the Downingtown Chamber of Commerce's Civic Awards Committee included: JoAnn Ogden, Junior Woman's Club; Peg Fisher Brown, Senior Woman's Club; Rev. Richard Bartholomew, Downingtown Ministerium; Charles "Bud" Bruton, Downingtown Rotary Club; Donald Bireley, Downingtown Lions Club; James Murphy, Downingtown Optimists Club. John Talierco was chairman.

The following members of Girl Scout Troop 442 hiked from Kerr Park to Marsh Creek State Park: Dawn Steely, Cathy Madiro, Dana Nixdorf, Jennifer Esworthy, Denise Luminella, Pam Whitely, Kelly Waitman, Margie Snyder, Heidi Brown, Janice Huyett, Laura Clark and Kathleen Corrigan.

Representatives of Downingtown area churches participating in the World Day of Prayer at Messiah Lutheran Church were: Mrs. W.W.E. Ash, Uwchlan Society of Friends; Mrs. Charles Mills, Mount Raymond UAME Church; Mrs. Robert Arters, East Brandywine Baptist Church; Mrs. George McAllister, Downingtown Methodist Church; Mrs. James Kennedy, First Baptist Church; Mrs. Melvin Schucker, Central Presbyterian Church; Mrs. James Watson, Bethel AME Church; Mrs. Thomas Woodward, St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Alvin Walton, a DHS student, won the foul shooting competition, sponsored by the Downingtown-Uwchlan Joint Recreation Commission.

Whippet wrestlers who qualified for District I competition were: Roger Wenk, Scott Mackenzie, Mike Smith and Jesse Hamilton.

Property transfers: 307 Paul Circle, Downingtown, \$32,750; 14 Wyndham Ct., East Brandywine, \$38,710; 1121 Yankee Dr., West Bradford, \$64,700; 6 Highspire Rd., Lyndell, \$55,000; 17 Waterview Rd., Upper Uwchlan, \$47,900.

DHS students attending the Central Chester County Vocational-Technical School, who won first place in a regional skills competition, were: Tony Madiro, appliance repair; Mike Brown, small engine repair; and Tom Panetti, industrial electrical.

Members of Boy Scout Troop 2 who went on a winter campout were: Steve McDonnell, Charles Bradford, Glenn Usher, George Bradford, John Bradford, Kevin Pickney, Jeff Vincent and Paul Smith.

There was an uproar in Wallace Township over the possibility of a prison being built on the Fuzzydale Farm property. But the state decided not to use the Glen Moore site.

New members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lionville were: Charles and Joanne Cantwell, Michael and Audrey Dawson, Betty Jones, and Terrie Neills.

Deacons at Windsor Baptist, Eagle, were: Charles Popjoy, chairman; Jim Dewees, vice chairman; Don Anthony, secretary; and Sam Supplee, treasurer.

East Stroudsburg State College pupils doing their student teaching included Tim Ashinhurst, Lionville, and Rose Marie Pomento, Downingtown.

Members of the Downingtown Lions Club were building an Information Center at the intersection of Routes 113 and 30, Lionville, for visitors who came to the area for the Bicentennial celebration.



Saluted at the West Bradford Fire Co. annual banquet were Dennis Riggins, fireman of the year, and Bernie Keiffer, junior fireman of the year.

Candidates for the Queen of Downingtown's observance of the national Bicentennial were: Kendra Brown, Mary DiFuria, Debbie Rowley, Marsha Lyman, Diane Casenta, Diane Payton, Holly Howard, Donna Swisher, Cheryl Wojtowicz, Susan Erdman, Julie Hawkes, Joanne Wallace and Lori Gregor.

The Glen Moore Fire Co. unveiled plans for expanding its firehouse. and the Ladies Auxiliary bought a new pizza oven for \$25.

New members of the Downingtown Junior Woman's Club were Phyllis Cloak, Betty Haft and Nancy Norton.

Members of the Central Presbyterian team, which won the Downingtown Church Basketball League, were: Wayne Davis, David Browne, Chris Daghir, Ken Borland, Ian Wood, Scott O'Neill, Ray Ifert, Buddy Trego, John Henderlite, Bob McClure, Mark Walton, Scott Artz and Drew Schwartz.

## **We have a new, upgraded website**

The Downingtown Area Historical Society has unveiled its upgraded website, [www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](http://www.downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org). In addition to providing information about the organization's mission, history, by-laws, links to other historical organizations, and great gifts about local history you can buy, the new website enables members and friends to get in contact with us via [info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@downingtownareahistoricalsociety.org).

The site also offers access to all of the society's past newsletters and Hist-O-Grams, which have been emailed weekly to members and friends.

The site was designed by Val DiLuigi, who also designed and maintains websites for the Borough of Downingtown, St. Anthony's Lodge, Downingtown Concerts in the Park, and several businesses.

Examples of her free lance visual design work, which also includes street banners, flyers and invitations, can be seen at [www.moodswingset.com](http://www.moodswingset.com). She can be contacted at [vdiluigi68@gmail.com](mailto:vdiluigi68@gmail.com).

Val was born and raised in Downingtown's Johnstown section, where she resides today. She is a graduate of West Chester University, and is employed as an Administrative Assistant at Downingtown's Borough Hall.

## **Looking for Odd Fellows' items**

The International Order of Odd Fellows is one of the fraternal groups which once thrived in Downingtown. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Odd Fellows Hall was at 151 W. Lancaster Ave.; later their headquarters was next to what is now the Ralston & Bredickas Funeral Home.

We have quite a few Odd Fellows items in our archival collection, including unique hats, gold-braided regalia, badges, minutes and ceremonial books. We're looking for more Odd Fellows-related items, such as photos, printed materials and things we never saw before. We plan to exhibit them at Ashbridge House later this spring. Please contact Parry Desmond at 610-269-8037 or [parry37@aol.com](mailto:parry37@aol.com) if you have Odd Fellows materials with a Downingtown connection, which we could include in the exhibit. Thanks.

## **Clip joint open this Sunday afternoon**

We're going to have a newspaper clipping & pasting session at Ashbridge House on Sunday afternoon, March 7 at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays.

The sessions will be between 1 PM and 4 PM, but you can come and go at any time that's convenient to you. Don't forget your scissors. Cookies and root beer will be served.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 10

March 8, 2011

## Local news items in March 1951

Items found in the March 1951 editions of *The Archive*, a Downingtown newspaper.

Pauline Ingram and Barbara McLeod were new elementary teachers in the Downingtown School District.

Recipients of service pins at Downingtown Paper Co. were: Tony Fazzzini, 30 years, and James Baum and Joe Valentino, both 10 years.

Mrs. William Funk was the leader of the new Brownie troop at Fairview Presbyterian Church. Committee members were: Mrs. William Bender, Mrs. James Heagy, Mrs. Anthony Cirrito, Mrs. John Kelly, Mrs. John Galt and Mrs. Sue McFalls.

Members of the reorganized Explorer Scout unit in Marshall ton were: Bob Bunting, Ernest Ammoriello, Robert and Walter McCue, Dale Ellingsworth, Harold Trimble, Albert Miller, Robert Wallace and David Smith.

Among those who attended a Valentine's party for Huston McIlvaine were: Suzy Norris, Gerry Deets, Margie Eppolito, Jeannie Charles, Mary Jean Lillard, Janet Bowman, Robert Stringer, Bobbie Manning, Bobby Simmons, Joe Bonaduce, Bobby McClure, and Jean and Bobby Mattson.

Dr. Herman Kramm was chairman of the Red Cross fund drive. Area captains were: Emanuel Gindin, Charles Sigle, Richard Warren, Gordon Carpenter, Robert Plank, Robert Piersol, Howard Taylor and Oscar DiBerardinis.

Cast members in a one-act play put on by the Junior Woman's Club and directed by Mrs. Elmer Hemberger were: Mrs. LaVerne Moore, Mrs. Donald White, Mrs. Gerald Lyons, Mrs. Daniel Massimini, Mrs. Wayne Bucher, Mrs. Warren Mitchell, Mrs. Harlan Morrison, Mrs. Ray Beveridge, Mrs. George Dowlin, Mrs. H. Kalbitzer, Mrs. Ethan Berry, and Mrs. Ed Irwin.

Dottie Madrigale, Philomena D'Addezio, Helen Gaspero, and Rose Eppolito were winners in the blanket club at St. Joseph's Catholic Church.

New officers of St. Anthony's Lodge Women's Auxiliary were: Margaret Sciarretta, president; Florence DeLuca, vice president; Rose Formica, secretary; and Hilda Mento, treasurer.

Marshallton School students who turned in the most American Stores sales slips, collected to earn a TV set, were: Caroline and Lois Matlack, Joseph Glisson, Richard Durnall, Eddie Martin, Ruth Ann Osborn, Joan Brackbill and Audrey Dawson.

Models in Girl Scout Troop 2's fashion show were: Jane Romig, Dorothea Snyder, Connie Hamilton, Betty Gilken, Katherine Myers, Doris Cox, Joanne Forbes, Betty Jane Fisher, Patty Keenan, Joan Courtless, Elizabeth and Loretta Short, and Mary Jo DiBerardinis.

New members of the Downingtown Rotary Club were: Clifford Rosella, Leonard Fitzgerald, Earl Radcliffe, Henry Smith and Edward Russell.

## Where to find earlier Hist-O-Grams

We've been emailing Hist-O-Grams to members and friends of the Historical Society since last October. If you want to see those earlier editions, you can access them from our website—[downingtownareahistoricalociety.org](http://downingtownareahistoricalociety.org)—which was upgraded by Valerie DiLuigi, our skilled webmaster.

Some of the topics covered in last year's Hist-O-Grams include:

- Downingtown Little League was founded in 1949
- American Legion's School Medal was established by Downingtown Post
- How Kerr Memorial Park was established
- FFA and Harvest Queens once blossomed at DHS
- Recollections of a turn-of-the-century Downingtown schoolboy
- Despite Great Depression, borough thrived in 1941
- What was happening here in 1974
- Boffo blast blotted bad blood in borough 85 years ago

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 11

March 17, 2011

## Reflections on a changing landscape

Much has changed in the Downingtown area over the past half century. And much of the vintage news we report in our weekly Hist-O-Grams reflects a period when the Downingtown School District was comprised of a small industrial borough, encircled by smaller rural communities.

Over the years, most of the industries have left Downingtown and the borough has evolved into a middle class bedroom burg, while suburbia and shopping emporiums have been planted in the surrounding countryside.

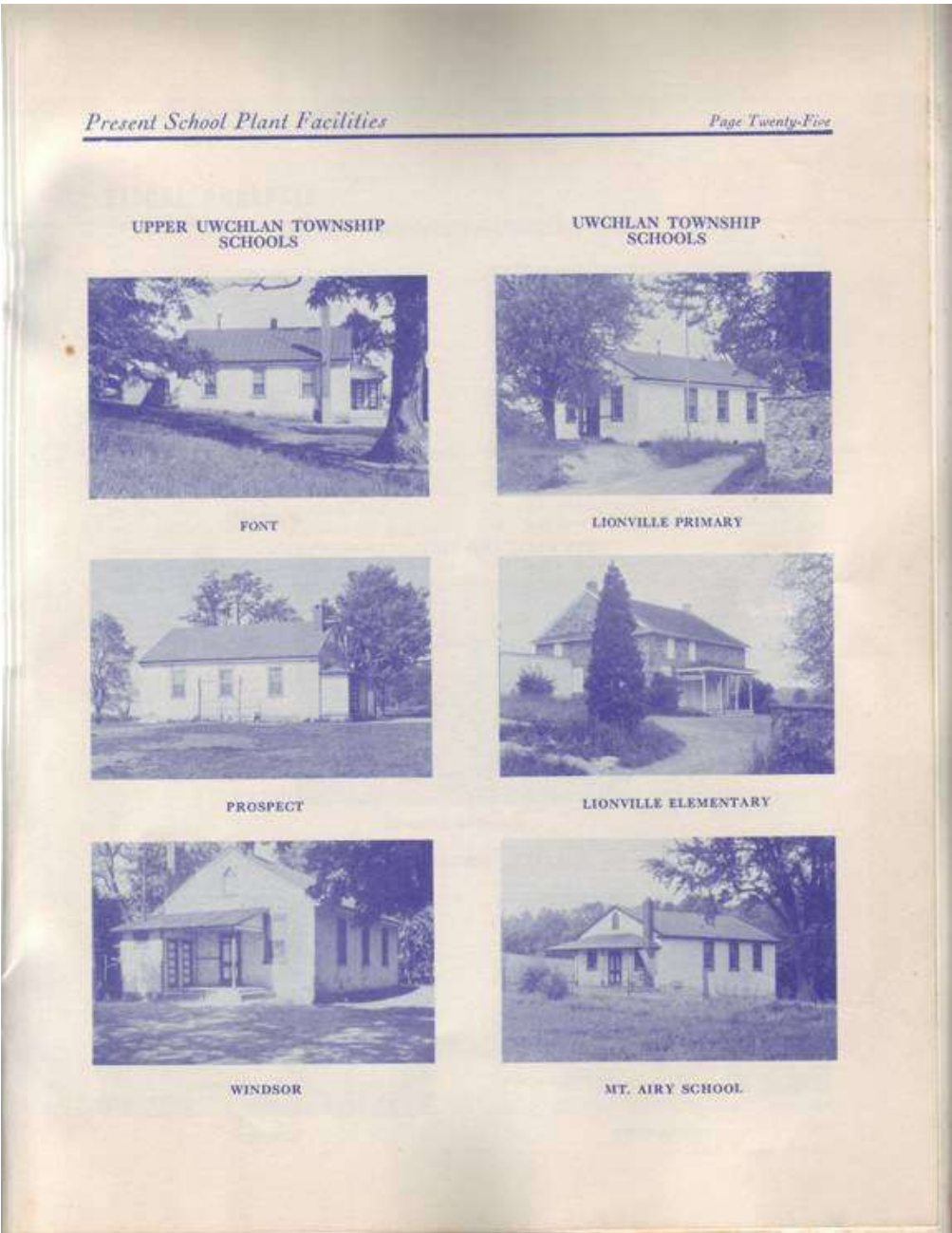
Perhaps the photos below of the 11 small schoolhouses used by elementary (grades 1-6) students through the 1950s best illustrate our changing landscape. The photos originally were published in a *Survey of School Building Needs and Related Problems in the Downingtown Area*, prepared by the Chester County Branch of the Pennsylvania Economy League in February 1955.

The “unsatisfactory” schoolhouses were located in five township school districts (East Brandywine, Upper Uwchlan, Uwchlan, Wallace and West Pikeland), which had not yet been consolidated into the Downingtown Area School District. Elementary students from the West Bradford District attended Marshallton School, while grade school pupils from Downingtown Borough and East Caln Township attended East Ward or West Ward School.

Although most of the townships still had independent school districts that operated elementary schools, all of those municipalities were part of the jointure, formed in 1950, that operated the Junior-Senior High School on Manor Avenue, which will house the STEM Academy, beginning next September.

The *Survey* report also noted that the School District’s total population in the early 1950s was about 12,000; now it’s nearly 60,000. And the number of public school students in the Downingtown area school system back then was about 2,100; that figure has grown to about 12,000 today.

Readers of this Hist-O-Gram who went to one of the schoolhouses pictured below are encouraged to send their interesting recollections or insights to us at [info@downingtownhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@downingtownhistoricalsociety.org).





EAST BRANDYWINE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



GUTHRIESVILLE



HOPEWELL

WEST PIKELAND TOWNSHIP SCHOOL



CHESTER SPRINGS

WALLACE TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS



INDIANTOWN



LINCOLN

## Whoops!

Bill Brookover questioned whether the Valentine party noted in the March 8 Hist-O-Gram was hosted by Huston McIlvaine. Bill was right; Huston Mattson was the host of the party attended by a bunch of youngsters in 1951. We doubt if Huston McIlvaine, president of Downingtown Paper Co., would have had a Valentine bash for a slew of grade school kids.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 12

March 23, 2011

## Maybe old schoolhouses weren't so great?

Youthful experiences are sometimes romanticized, as the years pass by. For instance, embellished recollections of trudging through the snow—often uphill in both directions—to and from school, which invariably were located 5 miles from home.

Well, based on several remembrances we've received in reaction to last week's Hist-O-Gram, attending a small schoolhouse wasn't always hunky-dory for kids who lived in rural townships.

Here's what Sandra Snyder Brannan of Glen Moore remembers:

*I attended both (Indiantown and Lincoln) Wallace Township schools in the late 1940's - early 1950's. Children today could not even imagine what it was like to attend the country schools. Outside toilets; carrying water in a bucket from neighbors' homes for drinking water, the water would slosh out of the bucket and into our shoes; more than one grade in the classroom; bringing potatoes and milk to school. The potatoes were put into the coals of the big pot-bellied stove in the middle of the class room; they would be ready for a warm lunch with the chocolate milk that was heated on top of the stove in the winter. Some children brought their lunch in paper sugar bags. The unlucky kids that had their desks by the old coal and wood stove would roast.*

*My father, Harold Snyder, made swing sets for each of the schools, from pipe. He was a welder and donated his time. I think he had gotten the pipe at no cost to the schools. The children each wrote a thank-you note to him. I still have some of the little notes.*

*I remember when I went to Downingtown Jr. High and the kids would make fun of the "country kids". The teachers could not believe that schools like ours still existed, when the subject came up one day in a class. I remember how it made me feel so self conscious.*

*Indiantown School has had a reunion every year, in September, for many, many years."*

And Kate Hallman Campbell, who now teaches AP English Literature and Multicultural Literature at DHS West and is Graduation Project Coordinator there, recalls:

*The elementary school I went to ( in West Pikeland next to the Chester Springs Post Office on Route 113) was originally the high school - it says so at the top of the building - and opened in 1907, I believe.*

*I started first grade there in the fall of 1957 and kids went there until 1964 when Pickering Valley opened. It then became the West Pikeland Township building. I don't know when it switched from high school to*

*elementary school - it was only two classrooms, plus the basement, where we had music with Mrs. Reinhart, the itinerant music teacher.*

*We didn't have a library - both classrooms had bookshelves in the cloakrooms - and the Chester County Library Bookmobile used to come by. No art, other than what Mrs. Carmichael and Miss Windolph did (seasonal stuff - tracing, cutting, and pasting) and no phys. ed. - just massive soccer and kickball games at recess.*

## More acquisitions

In addition to the acquisitions noted in our Feb. 23 Hist-O-Grams, here are more donations added last year to our Archival Collection:

**Mary Louise Corrigan** donated numerous photos, documents and company magazines from Chemical Leaman Tank Lines.

**Ann Berstler Watterson** brought us many photos and printed materials related to the Berstler and Laird families.

**Michael Antonelli** donated five old photo-postcards depicting Downingtown scenes.

**Ernie Jameson** brought documents, newspapers and photos related to: First Baptist Church, Downingtown National Bank, DHS Alumni Assn., the Downingtown Historical Commission, Downingtown High School, Downingtown Chamber of Commerce, First Financial S&L, and Maxwell's Hardware.

**Dennis Walton** donated the American Legion School Medal and the framed certificate he won as a ninth grader in 1971.

**Caroline Ash** and the family of **Harriet "Sissy" Whittaker** gave us DHS yearbooks from the 1950s and a booklet from the 50th reunion of the DHS Class of 1957.

**Rena Francella** gave us a 1924 Cuckoo yearbook, a button promoting the DHS band's 1976 trip to Orlando, Fla., copies of deeds and mortgages related to ownership of the Francella family home at 315 W. Lancaster Ave., Downingtown.

**Robert Klinger** donated three Future Farmers of America scrapbooks, full of photos and articles about DHS agriculture students, taught in the 1940s and 1950s by his father, **Harold Klinger**.

**Alice & David Brethaner** gave us a huge, lead printing plate of the zoning map adopted by Downingtown Borough, ca. 1940.

**Jay Byerly** sent us an original theatre card used to promote *The Blob*, part of which was filmed in Downingtown in 1957, plus photos of area homes owned by members of the Ashbridge family, a history of the Minquas Fire Company's Stanley Steamer, and info on the Log House in Downingtown.

**Steve Mascherino** brought a 1940s era card table, which has a leatherette top filled with printed ads for Downingtown businesses. Most of the firms no longer exist.

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# Downingtown Area Historical Society Hist-O-Gram

*Interesting Local History, Accessed From Our Archives*

Vol. 2, No. 13

March 30, 2011

## More “country kids” recall their school days

Response to our Hist-O-Grams on old schoolhouses in the Downingtown area has been amazing. Noted below are several interesting recollections by “Country Kids.”

Regarding our last Hist-O-Gram about going to small schoolhouses, Caroline Ash, a Downingtown native who now lives in the Chicago area, wrote:

*I remember the "country kids." The town kids called them "hayseeds." Of course, they are laughing all the way to the bank after selling the family farm.*

\*\*\*

Patricia D. Gaines, Chair of the Uwchlan Township Historic Commission advises:

*Just wanted to let your group know that our Lionville 1859 one-room school is open to the public from 2 PM to 4 PM on the first Sunday of April through November. There is no admission charge, and the building is staffed by volunteers of the Uwchlan Township Historical Commission. It is furnished with old school desks, and looks much like it did in the early 20th Century.*

*The Edith P. Moore Schoolhouse, the historic Uwchlan Meeting House, and the John Cadwalader House are all located on North Village Avenue in the Lionville National Historic District off Rte. 113. Call 610-280-9522 for details on their Open House events.*

\*\*\*

And Margaret Sharp of Wallace Township recalls:

*After reading about one-room schools I thought I have something to add. We lived four or five miles from St. Matthews School in West Vincent Township, and there were no snow days. I can remember my father putting chains on his 1936 Buick and driving across the field the back way because I always had to go to school.*

*Imagine that today. Our teacher was Mrs. Rice, who was there for us to learn, and those who did not stayed after school and did their work then. The older boys carried in the coal for the stove in the middle of the school house and they also carried out the ashes. There was no indoor plumbing and we used "outhouses" as bathrooms. Everyone had their special duties to help maintain the schoolroom inside and outside. This was during the Depression and a lot of the children would bring their sandwiches wrapped in wax paper saved from bread wrappers and many of them had sandwiches made from homemade bread. Much of the time we would have to walk home from school and that was considered fun because I could take a short cut through the woods and play in the creek on the way home. I remember those days as great years.*

*I also wanted to mention that I remember children wearing shoes with cardboard inner soles because they could not afford new shoes, and some children wore shoes with the back split out the back because they had outgrown their shoes.*

\*\*\*

Judy Orr Collier, DHS Class of 1957, offered these recollections:

*I went to first grade in Wynnewood, Pa., and that was the last time I had inside bathroom facilities at school until I entered the sixth grade at West Ward in Downingtown. We moved to the Glen Moore area and I attended second grade at what is now the East Nantmeal Township Building. When you first walked in the front door, there was cloakroom to the right and left, and inside there were rows and rows of desks for grades 1 through 8. There was ONE teacher for everyone, and at that time the teacher was Mrs. Bones, Now I wish I had paid more attention as to how she managed that feat. I remember her moving along the front of the rows, giving assignments or work. Every row was double desks, so my seat mate was in third grade. I must have been quite the busybody, because when the end of the year came, I was graduated to the fourth grade, totally skipping*

third grade. My parents did not want this to happen, so we moved to a home outside of Downingtown. So I was always a 'country kid'.

I went to the Guthriesville School where the third and fourth grades were downstairs and fifth grade was upstairs. And the "facilities" were once again ... outside. At one point, my Mother went to Harrisburg to try and get this changed but to no avail. My brother started school at Hopewell School for grades 1 and 2, which was very near our home. Our class was the first seventh grade to go to the 'new' Downingtown Jr/Sr High School. So my last six years were there. Now I'm living in the "country," just west of Lake Worth, Fla. So I am still a "country kid".

\*\*\*

Marjorie Lawn Gazzola, also DHS Class of 1957 recalls:

*It was interesting to read about others' experiences at local area elementary schools. I attended Marshallton Elementary School in West Bradford from 1946-1951. We had eight grades in four rooms and each teacher taught two grades. Our teachers were Miss Anna Nields, who was also the principal and taught grades 7 and 8; Mrs. Otter, grades 5 and 6; Mrs. Wickersham, grades 3 and 4, and Miss McIntyre, grades 1 and 2. In 1950, eighth-graders were sent to the Junior-Senior High in Downingtown. Then in 1951, seventh-graders were also sent there. Unlike the school that Sandra Snyder Brannan described in last week's Hist-O-Gram, we had bathrooms at Marshallton.*

*We all had to bring our own lunches and you could buy a small bottle of milk, which was delivered to the school daily. We too had no library, but the bookmobile would stop by monthly, and each room was allowed to choose 10 books.*

*West Bradford had only one school bus, which made two trips each morning and afternoon. My stop was near the beginning of the first route, so we were picked up about 7:15, driven to school, dropped off, then the bus made a second trip. School started at 9 AM. In the afternoon, my route was last, so we had an hour wait at school before the bus came for us. In cold weather, we would do chores for the teachers -- sweep floors, wash blackboards, etc. In warm weather, we played outside (baseball, jump rope), and there were plenty of open spaces and fields surrounding the school. There was no phys-ed or organized activities of any kind - we were strictly on our own and unsupervised. Our only playground equipment was one metal sliding board, a couple of swings and a sort of small wooden merry-go-round, which kids were always falling off. There was plenty of what would be described today as bullying. But we survived and actually received an excellent basic education at Marshallton.*

*Marjorie sent the photo below, which was taken at Marshallton School sometime in 1949-50. She thinks it's the entire student body. The view is from the stage overlooking the two classrooms occupied by grades 5 and 6 and 7 and 8, which were separated by a folding partition. She got the photo from Don D'Ginto, also of DHS Class of 1957. Don received it from someone who had attended a school reunion several years ago.*



## Clip joint will be open on Sunday afternoon

We're going to have another newspaper clipping & pasting session at Ashbridge House on Sunday afternoon, April 3 at Ashbridge House, our headquarters on East Lancaster Avenue, in the Ashbridge Shopping Center in East Caln. Parking is available at the Chick-Fil-A restaurant next door, which is closed on Sundays.

The sessions will be between 1 PM and 4 PM, but you can come and go at any time that's convenient to you. Don't forget your scissors. Cookies and root beer will be served.

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