

Drawing, courtesy of
Adrian Martinez.



The TURNPIKE TIMES

Volume 9 Number 1
Winter, 2004

A PUBLICATION OF THE DOWNINGTOWN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The President's Message

by Roger Grigson

Considering the Ashbridge House was deeded to us December 30, 1999, major changes have taken place. The building has been stabilized, the chimneys have been replaced, a new roof was installed; in general the entire outside has been redone. Work has been ongoing in the interior. Donated help refurbished two fireplaces. Walls were removed. It has been rewired, replumbed and heating and air-conditioning has been installed. We are well on our way to making the building a working headquarters for the Historical Society.

We have raised \$374,000 through grants and donations. Our capital campaign, previously stalled, will now have life breathed into it this spring. To

finish the walls and the furnishing of the building for use, money needs to be raised. A committee is working on this. You will all be contacted for your help.

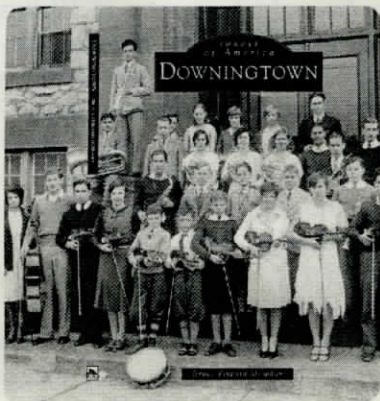
I hope to see you all at the quarterly meeting on March 8 at Simpson Meadows. Gene DiOrio will share with us some of the problems they have shared in the restoration of Graystone in Coatesville.

For those planning ahead, our annual dinner will be at St. Anthony's on Sunday, May 16. This will be the first major distribution of our book on Downingtown. Bruce Mowday, who wrote the text for this book, will be on hand to sign these first copies. *

Great Excitement

With great excitement, the Downingtown Area Historical Society announces the publication of a book on Downingtown. Part of the Arcadia Image Series, the book recounts the rich history of Downingtown through nearly 200 historic images, mainly derived from the Society's archives and the personal collections of some of its members. Bruce Mowday, a member and also author of Coatesville and Along the Brandywine River, graciously agreed to write the text.

The final revisions have been submitted and delivery is planned for May 1. Books can be reserved by sending a check for \$19.95, along with your name and address, to DAHS, P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA, 19335. If you want the book mailed to you, please add an additional \$2 for shipping and handling.



Our Website: Thanks to the diligent efforts of Jay Byerly, DHS has an attractive, informative and expanded-upon website which is connected to several Chester County links by simply keying in "downingtown historical society" or <http://www.downingtownhistoricalsociety.org>

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The Great Storm of 1888

Researched by Ruth Lowe

(Source: Chester County Archive, March, 17, 1888 – Published in Downingtown – Forerunner of The Archive)

The great storm that began on March 11th and continued through March 12th was not a local affair in 1888. The blizzard raged all around stopping railroad travel and suspending telegraph communication all over the Northeast. The storm began early on Sunday with a northeast wind and rain, which increased in volume. Around midnight the temperature dropped and the wind changed to the northwest and brought great quantities of snow. Although the ground was initially saturated from the rainstorm, everything exposed to the snowstorm was completely covered except the places where the wind had carried the snow away. The wind continued all day Monday and into the night, resulting in a complete blockade of the public highways and railroads.

In Downingtown, Lancaster Avenue was in many places impassible. On Lancaster Avenue between Manor and Viaduct Avenues, the snow was three to four feet deep from fence to fence including the sidewalks, and travel was diverted to the fields. East of Whiteland Avenue the highway was in the same condition. In every direction sidewalks were almost impassible due to the huge drifts. It was bitterly cold, the mercury hovering close to zero until Wednesday morning. Less than fifty students attended the public school Monday morning and by noon the students were dismissed until Wednesday morning.

Railroad traffic was blockaded. Trains which left Downingtown for Philadelphia in the morning, did not arrive at Broad Street Station until evening. There was no communication by rail with Philadelphia from Sunday night until Tuesday morning. The Parkesburg train which left Broad Street Station at 11:45 a.m. on Monday halted at the tower and went no further. On Monday, a west-bound freight train was derailed and became snow-bound in the cut opposite the present day Hunt Avenue and Lancaster Avenue, where it remained until Tuesday afternoon, blocking the westbound track.

The Day Express due in Downingtown on Monday evening was stranded at the water troughs, near Dr. Eshleman's (Glen Isle Farm) all night. The high winds caused a dozen or more poles and wires to fall breaking several windows in each car. The passengers were exposed to the severe blasts of the weather. Forty men and three

locomotives worked through the night clearing the blockade. Tuesday morning the train pulled into the station about 9 o'clock with passengers starving and almost frozen. Breakfast was provided by Mr. Richard Boldridge, proprietor of the Pennsylvania House Hotel, and Mrs. Elizabeth Fondersmith, owner of a bakery. Both businesses were on W. Lancaster Avenue across from the station. Another heavy engine was attached and the train moved off towards Philadelphia. Some of the passengers gave their experiences as follows:

"It was bitterly cold," said Andrew J. Corliss of Helena, Montana. "I have been in a Montana blizzard when I was on an engineering corps, and this cyclone of last night was almost as bad. It was possible to keep the cars heated and we lay there shivering while the wind and snow swept over and under the car and blew fine dry ice dust in through the cracks and down the ventilators."

Another of the passengers complained about the lack of food, and said she never expected to be famished and snowbound within thirty-two miles of Philadelphia.

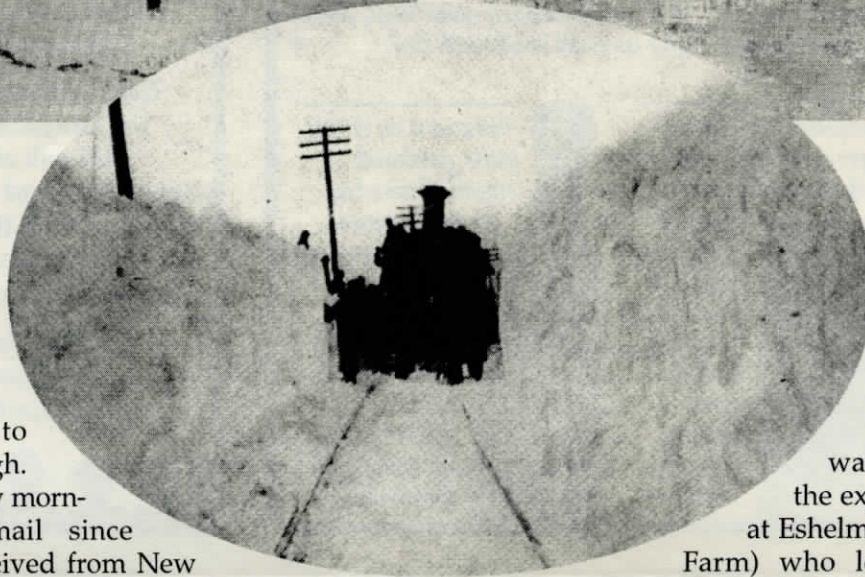
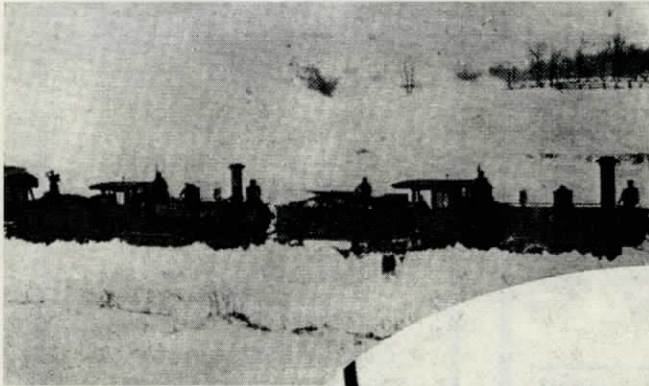
It called forth the resources of both the railroad and the telegraph companies, but the Storm King was ruler for the time being.

The oldest inhabitant was stumped for once; he could tell us of the great storm in January 1857, but the March storm of 1888 was too much for him.

Monday morning the 9:30 westbound train on the Waynesburg Railroad became snowbound near the Wilmington and Northern Junction. Thursday morning more than 100 men with shovels left to dig out an imprisoned train.

Conductor Sylvester Makens' first trip out on Monday morning of the Chester Valley Railroad was brought to a stop at Walker's Crossing less than a mile from the depot. The track was obstructed by fallen telephone lines and drifting snow. In a little while the cut just east of the engine house was nearly full with drifted snow, preventing the return of the train. Engineer Smith with the rest of the crew remained loyally with their charge until Wednesday morning, when Conductor Makens boarded a passing Pennsylvania Railroad train for Philadelphia to report the circumstances at headquarters. In the afternoon three powerful engines started from Bridgeport with snowplows, but the snow plows

*These photos show the effects of the snowfall of 1888 in the area.
Crews of men were sent out to dig through the drifts that buried the tracks to clear the rail line.*



were not able to force a way through.

On Wednesday morning, the first mail since Saturday was received from New York. Wednesday morning the fierce wind which had blown constantly for three days, began to lessen and was followed by a welcome rise in the temperature. A large group of men employed by the railroad soon cleared the tracks of snow, and by evening passenger and freight trains were running close to schedule in both directions – the blizzard was over.

After dinner, the Street Committee assembled a group of men and shoveled open Lancaster Avenue from one end to the other and started on Uwchlan Avenue. On Uwchlan Avenue, there was a stretch of 150 yards where the road was filled up as high as the top of the fences. Work on this road was completed on Thursday morning and the men were then put to work opening the gutters and putting the Borough in proper shape for a thaw.

Town Joltings:

Mr. Newton Miller, of Uwchlan on Monday morning started with the morning's milk to the creamery when at the crossroads he could get no further and unhitched the team and returned with help to dig out the sled. All that was visible of the abandoned sled was the tip end of a standard. Ten feet of snow covered the milk cans.

A stranger who was blockaded with the express train all night at Eshelman's land (Glen Isle Farm) who lost his hat while walking into town to get his breakfast, said he had lived in the west, but this was his worst blizzard experience.

How sorry we are that our friend Samuel B. Buchanan had returned to Denver. We would have taken pleasure in showing him a blizzard once before going to his western home.

Honeybrook was heard from on Wednesday morning. A two-horse sleigh brought the postmaster, Rev. Mr. Quigg, Mr. Long and the mail to Downingtown.

It certainly is an ill wind that blows nobody good. While the milk train was off, Downingtown got as much milk as was wanted at five cents per quart.

Our agents had quite a vacation as far as selling tickets or handling freight was concerned, but the answering of questions was no picnic.

Samuel Downing's barn at Lionville had almost half of the roof blown off.

Winter snow storms often took a heavy toll on railroad traffic, especially in the mountains out west and the sweeping northern plain, but the blizzard of 1888 created havoc from Alexandria, Virginia to Boston, Massachusetts along the Atlantic Coast and also as far west as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Buffalo, New York. *

DONATIONS WANTED

by Carol Grigson

Bottles, blotters, pens, scissor sharpeners – these and many more items tell the story of how people lived. The Downingtown Area Historical Society is actively trying to build its collection. Our collection has many items, but the list of what we don't have is longer and greater.

Members keep a watchful eye on e-bay for items from the Downingtown

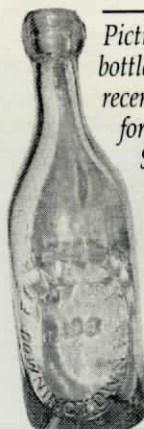
Area. We would like to have donated high school yearbooks, especially the "Cuckoo". Many items needed by the Society are in attics and basements, long forgotten.

While doing spring cleaning, keep an eye open for those forgotten items which help tell the history of an area. If in doubt about some item, please give us a call at 610-269-1167. *

Pictured here is a scissor sharpener from Canby Oil on Brandywine Ave, paper coasters from the Downingtown Paper Manufacturing Co, and a



medicine bottle from Sides Pharmacy, previously located across from the railroad station.



Pictured is an O'Neil bottle, purchased recently from e-bay for the Historical Society. According to the City Directory, Francis O'Neil was a bottler in 1874 and specialized in ale and popper (soda pop).

QUARTERLY MEETING

MARCH 8, 2003

will be held
at Simpson Meadows
101 Plaza Drive
Downingtown

Refreshments at 7:00 p.m.
Speaker at 7:30 p.m.

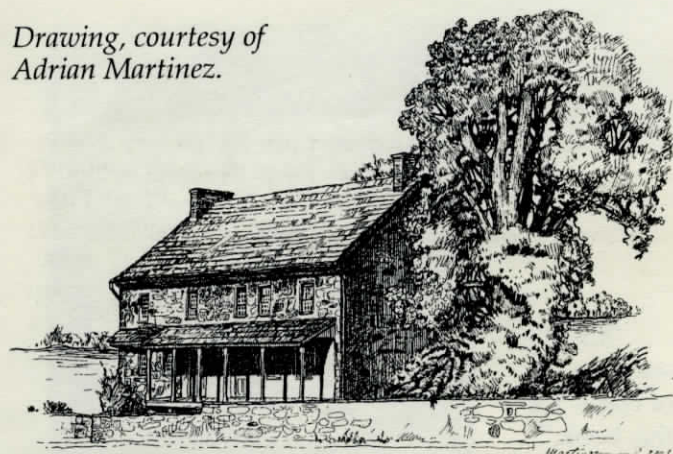
Gene DiOrto, curator of the Graystone Society will talk about the renovation and the problems involved with the renovation of Graystone, home of the Lukens family.

All are invited.
Admission and refreshments are free.



Downingtown Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 9
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Drawing, courtesy of
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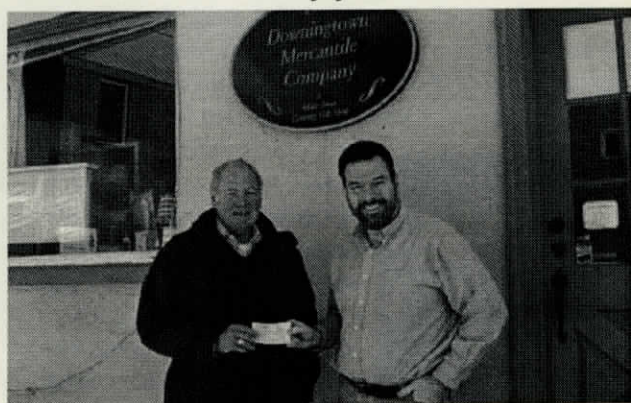
The Ashbridge House is almost livable; it needs interior painting and carpet. The water line needs to be dug for the sprinkler system. In doing renovations, we found a 17 foot well in the floor of the summer kitchen, probably around 200 years old and used before the summer kitchen was built around 1850.

We have applied for a grant from the Chester County Conference and Visitor Bureau to help us build a covered patio, sidewalk for the handicapped and much needed grading. (The development changed

the original contour lines, resulting in some water problems.) If granted, and we are hopeful of it, we will need to raise the \$25,000 matching funds by December 31 of this year.

We are very proud of our book on Downingtown, which Bruce Mowday wrote in conjunction with the Historical Society. If you have not already seen it, you can see it at several places in town and will also be available in Kerr Park on Good Neighbor Day. If you are at the park, stop by and tell us who you are. ✂

~ In Great Appreciation ~



Shown in the picture is Roger Grigson, President of the Downingtown Area Historical Society receiving a check for \$300 from George Lutz, one of the owners of the Downingtown Mercantile Company. Along with his partner Spencer Pyle, the shop designed and sold small crocks showing the historical log cabin of Downingtown. A portion of each sale was put aside to help in the restoration of the Ashbridge House, the future headquarters of the Historical Society.

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New Book on Downingtown explores history of borough

By Bryan G. Robinson

(By permission, from the May 27-June 2, 2004 issue of the Downingtown Ledger, the following interview appeared).

Fresh off the heels of releasing his fourth book, "Coatesville," last summer, local author Bruce Mowday is now releasing his fifth book, "Downingtown."

Like its predecessor, this book is part of Arcadia Publishing's "Image of America" series and instead of vintage photos from Coatesville, includes vintage photos from, you guessed it, Downingtown.

"As I was working on the Coatesville book, Roger and Carol Grigson from the Downingtown Area Historical society approached me about doing a similar book for Downingtown," said Mowday.

He agreed, not only because of his past experience with Arcadia, but also because he knew how much the local historical society contributed to the community and he wanted to help it, in turn. A portion of the proceeds of the book will go to the historical society and will be used to maintain the Ashbridge House, the historic house in East Caln that the society is renovating for its new headquarters.

The first task, though, was to find enough quality photographs for the book, he said. "We took a look at photographs that Roger and Carol had, plus some archives at the Chester County Historical Society," he said. He said individuals also provided photos of Downingtown.

He said especially supportive was Susannah Brody, a member of the Downingtown Area Historical Society, who was the point person for the initial gathering of the images. "We used her kitchen table as a staging for many months," he said.

According to his acknowledgements, she also kept a record of those members who offered images to be used in this book and aided in the verification of information used in the captions.

"She deserves a lot of credit for this book," he said in the acknowledgment.

Altogether he said they selected more than 200 images. Most of the images contained in the book were the property of the Downingtown Area Historical Society, with an important segment of that material being composed of the Joseph E. Miller collection.

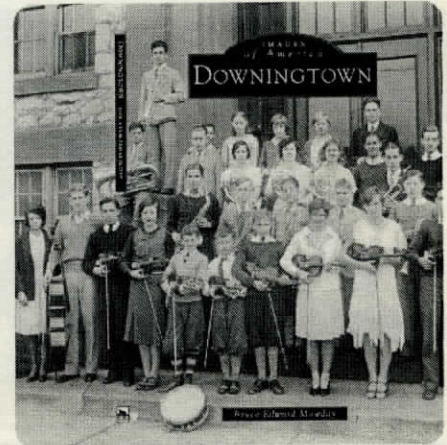
It is, in fact, important enough to almost fill one of the chapters.

Others who contributed from their personal collections, he said, were Dorothea Parker, Ruth Lowe, Doris Keen, Nancy D'Angelo, Doris Yocum, Alfred Giannanino, Mike Mowrey, Dorothy Miller Plank, Dorothy A. Plank, William Barrett, Hallan Usher, Louise Corrigan, Jeanne Bicking, Mary S. Young, Theresa Francella Boylan, Nicky Anderson, Robert Kahler and Wes Pannebaker. (He also thanked his wife Katherine Harlan, for her copy editing skills and her creative and marketing ideas.)

"It was difficult trying to figure out what to use," he admitted. However, he said they knew what they wanted. "We wanted to have a good representation of the town and its people," he said.

As for the text, Gene DiOrio, who had worked with Mowday on the Coatesville book for Arcadia, loaned his 1909 copy of the "History of Downingtown" by Charles H. Pennypacker to help in the research. He also consulted Jane Davidson's "A History of Downingtown."

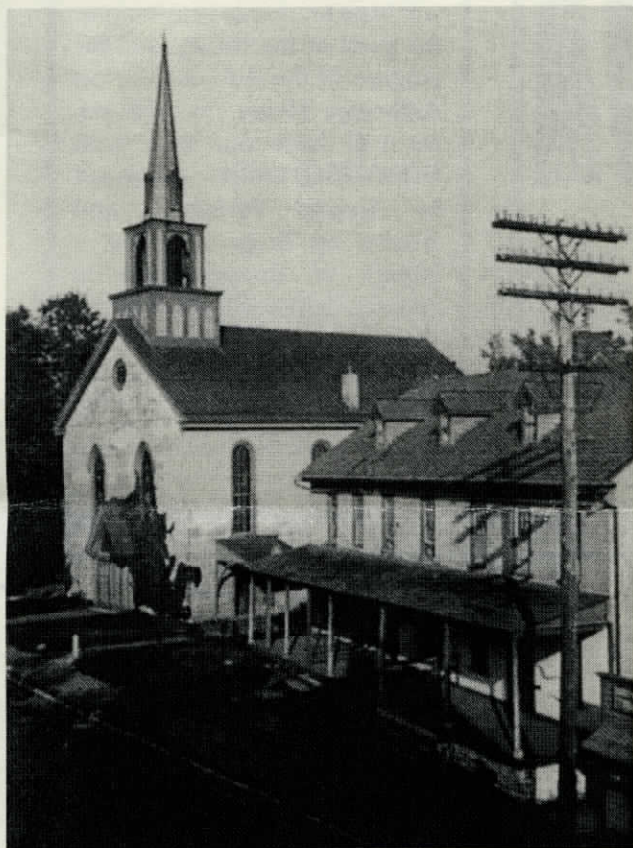
Mowday, who was born and raised in the Coatesville area, said it was interesting to learn about the history of the borough, where, he lived



This photo (shown on page 33 of the Downingtown book) is the S. Austin Bicking Paper (the first mill in the borough) float dated 1881-1909.

for many years on Highland Avenue before moving to Uwchlan Township. For example, he said in the early 1900s was a business called Hess' Oyster House. Another house, he said, was the Halfway House, and it wasn't what it sounded like, he said.

"It was an inn halfway between Lancaster and Philadelphia and was across the street from the present McDonald's in the borough," he said. As much as possible, he said he tried to include where things were in relation to how the town is today.



This photo (shown on page 19 of the Downingtown book) is of two early structures in the middle of town which were the Central Presbyterian Church (now Dane Decor) and the Halfway House Inn (now a parking area).

Also in the book is the town's festivals and parades, and an entire section on the fire companies in the borough.

For more information on ordering "Downingtown," call Roger or Carol Grigson at 610-269-1167. Cost of the book is \$20, plus \$2 for shipping and handling. Part of the proceeds go to the restoration of the Ashbridge House and the programs of the Downingtown Area Historical Society. Books also can be picked up at the Downingtown Area Chamber of Commerce or Downingtown Mercantile.

BY-LAWS

After a great deal of work by various committees of the Downingtown Area Historical Society, the Society is now operating under a new set of by-laws. Rather than trying to amend the old ones in a piecemeal fashion, the committee decided to start from scratch. The committee soon realized that much had happened and changed since the original by-laws were written in 1978. The area of interest now encompassed with the entire Downingtown School District, not just the borough of Downingtown.

The committee sought out and studied the by-laws of several organizations. They also consulted the sample by-laws for non-profit organizations, which were made available to the group by the American Bar Association. After many revisions, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the new by-laws at their March meeting.

Following the procedure of the old by-laws, an announcement of the proposed changes was made at the general quarterly meeting in March. Copies were made available to any interested party. A vote was held of the membership at the next general meeting, which was the annual dinner on May 16. The by-laws were accepted and are the operating constitution of the Downingtown Area Historical Society.

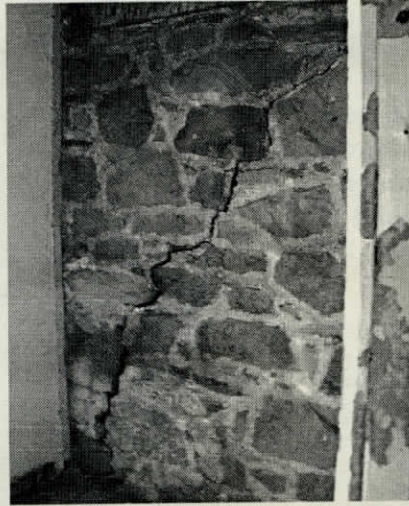
In an over simplified way, the new by-laws provide that the Society is run, on a day to day basis, by the Board of Directors, who are responsible for the business of the Society. An annual meeting of all the members will be held once a year to approve or make suggestions to the Board. The new by-laws were needed to include provisions for modern means of communication, as well as the realization that it is not possible to take a vote of the membership for each decision.

ROOFLINES

by Carol Grigson

In doing renovations on the 2nd floor, the original roofline of 1709 was discovered while removing damaged wallboard. At first appearing like a simple crack, further investigation showed that the height of the roof was raised with the addition that was put onto the house around 1750. (This addition changed the shape of the house from the original 2 story building to a taller, L shaped building which now includes the entire front and east walls.)

After much discussion, the decision was reached to keep the roofline visible so that visitors to the house could get a better idea of the stages of building which became The Ashbridge House. (The main building came in 3 stages. The original was a large room with loft. Before 1750 a full room was added to this structure. Around 1750, a two story L-shaped addition doubled the size of the house, giving the upstairs area 3 large bedrooms, each with its own fireplace. Before 1800 the last stage of



major development took place, when the north wall of the original building was taken down and the north wall of the 1750 addition was extended to produce the rectangular building of today. The summer kitchen came almost 50 years later.)

GOOD NEIGHBOR DAY



JULY 3, 2004

Once again the Downingtown Area Historical Society will have a presence at the annual Good Neighbor Day in Downingtown. Held on Saturday, July 3, this year because of the 4th being on a Sunday, the Society will hope to educate people about the goals of the Society and the progress of the restoration of the Ashbridge House. In addition, we will have our new book **DOWNINGTOWN**, published by Arcadia Publishing and written by Bruce Mowday, a history of Downingtown in pictures. Orders will also be taken for our tapestry depicting the history of Downingtown. Stop by our booth and say hello!

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Drawing, courtesy of
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
by Roger Grigson

We received word in July that our grant request from the Chester County Conference and Visitors Bureau had been approved. This organization granted us \$25,000 (project total cost \$50,000) for the purpose of regrading the land around the Ashbridge House to keep the water from coming down the hill and into the house. By regrading, we can also construct a handicapped sidewalk for entrance into the house, eliminating the need for the stairs, which lead from Primavera. Lastly, this grant will provide money to construct a patio with a cover, allowing us to have larger receptions at the house. The only problem is that we can't spend the money unless we raise the matching funds. We have made some progress towards this goal. The work must be completed by June of 2005.

We are very appreciative to those individuals who donated money in memory of William Wagoner for the purpose of the restoration of the Ashbridge House. To date we have received \$660. Some of you might remember Bill as the person who found the original DAR sign commemorating the Downing barn as a hospital for revolutionary soldiers. Because of him, the sign was rededicated on Bell Tavern Road.

The Capital Campaign has officially begun and we have received donations which have been put towards the needed matching funds for the current grant. We plan small gatherings of people to tell them about the house and our plans, and hope for their support. We also will be contacting all the members of the Historical Society. To date, through many grants,

we have raised and spent over \$400,000. The outside restoration is 90% complete. We are now working on the interior, with the hopes of using, at least part of the building, by the end of this year.

I urge all of you to plan to come to our quarterly meeting on September 13. As is our tradition, this meeting will be a showing of the Chester County Day Slides. The meeting will be held at Simpson Meadows, 101 Plaza Drive. Refreshments begin at 7:00 pm with the show starting at 7:30 pm. Our Third Annual Calendar, just off the press, will be available at this meeting for \$10.00. 

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Articles added to our collection

By Carol Grigson

Through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Donald White and their son, Don "Buddy" White Jr., the Downingtown Area Historical Society has added items to its collection. A very complete, pristine collection of football programs for Downingtown High School is part of the gift. Items related to the Centennial of 1959, some old copies of the DOWNINGTOWN ARCHIVE, and printed material on other related historic topics make up

this contribution. We are very pleased to receive these items, especially now that we have a special place to care for them.

This would be a good time to make a note to yourself that as you are cleaning out attics and basements, and come across items from the area that reflect the past, to call 610-269-1167. We are actively seeking items to round out our collection. *js*



Some of the items provided by Mr. and Mrs. Donald White

Old Well Found

By Carol Grigson

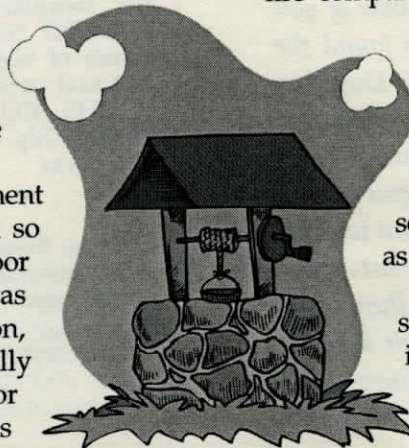
Old houses are amazing places; one never knows what is around or under the next corner or floor. Last issue we talked about the finding of the original roofline of the structure believed to have been there in 1709. We know that two more construction phases occurred in the 18th century, first turning the house into an L shaped dwelling and later back to a rectangular shape. The summer kitchen was built sometime around 1850.

While trying to remove the cement on the floor in the summer kitchen so water lines could be added and the floor be made usable, an old well was discovered. It is in perfect condition, almost as if someone carefully wrapped it up and put it away for further use. It is made of stone, is

30 inches across the top, is 17 feet deep to the water line, which is clear water. By dropping things down the well and dropping lines, it is estimated that the water is 20 inches deep.

It is the hope of the Society, with the help of fire companies, that any old gas can be expelled, the water temporarily drained, and the wet bottom can be sifted for whatever fell into the well. If one looks at where the well is, compared with the other phases of building, it would have had to be the well for either the first or second phase, which would be as early as 1709 or as late as 1760.

So that all visitors can enjoy seeing the well, the plans include interior lighting and a glass cover. Stay tuned for the results of scraping the bottom! *js*



DAHS Collection Items Come Home to the Ashbridge House

By Carol Grigson

Since 1998, all the property of the Downingtown Area Historical Society has been in storage after leaving Borough Hall. Through the generosity of the Chester County Archives, 100 boxes were moved and catalogued at the government services building on Westtown Road. The articles were kept in a climate controlled area until they could return to a permanent home.

The first interior room slated for completion was a room for the collection. All paint has been scraped, and the wood has been sanded and repainted. By the time this newsletter is published, the room will contain all of the 700+ items, which have previously been accessioned and catalogued.

Help in preparing this room was given by a Boy Scout troop, working on eagle badge community service. Scouts transported the items from the government services building, as well as scraped and painted surfaces. (An in depth article on this troop is slated for the next issue.)

This is just the beginning. All of the collections of the Downingtown Area Historical Society are coming together in one place, where they can be made accessible to the general public. *JA*

QUARTERLY MEETING

SEPTEMBER 13, 2004

will be held at Simpson Meadows

101 Plaza Drive, Downingtown

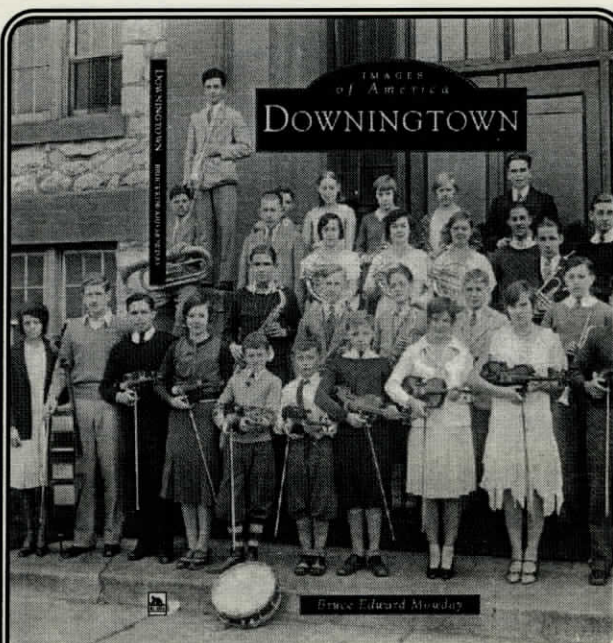
Refreshments at 7:00 p.m.

Presentation at 7:30 p.m.

*This meeting will be a showing of the
Chester County Day Slides*

All are invited.

Admission & refreshments are free.



Images of Downingtown

The new book on Downingtown, published by Arcadia Press and written by Bruce Mowday, reached our hands on June 1. Those who had preordered had theirs immediately mailed. Others picked up the preordered books. Books were available on Good Neighbor Day and are still available for sale. The book contains over 200 photographs, many from private collections. They make wonderful gifts.

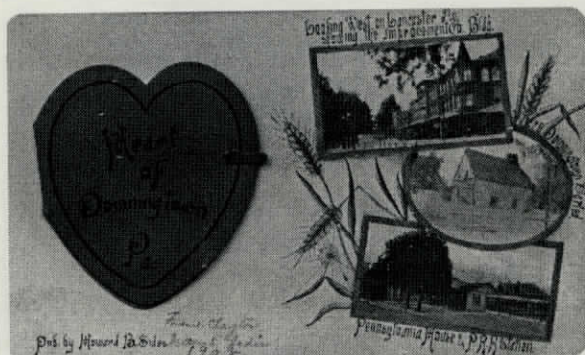
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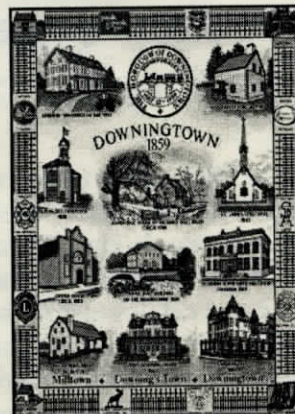
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**GREAT
GIFT
IDEA!**

The Downingtown Area Historical Society proudly presents...

The Downingtown, Pennsylvania Tapestry Throw "A Warm Memento"

Featuring the historic sites of Downingtown, PA, this custom-designed throw is a wonderful accent to any chair, sofa, bed or table. It is sure to become a treasured heirloom. Woven in full color. 100% pre-washed cotton. 50"x65" Fully Fringed.



Available for only
\$55.00

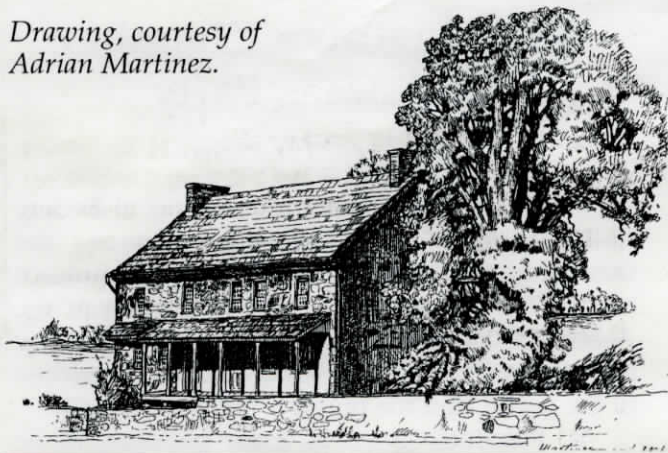
Made in the USA by Riddle & Company, LLC.

Do you own one of these heirlooms? Present stock is down to two (2). We are willing to reorder for Christmas, but we need to have some idea of the numbers.

If you are planning to order one, take a minute to call 610-269-1167. Otherwise, we cannot guarantee Christmas delivery.

Downingtown Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 9
Downingtown, PA 19335

Drawing, courtesy of
Adrian Martinez.



The TURNPIKE TIMES

Volume 9, Number **4**
Fall, 2004

A PUBLICATION OF THE DOWNINGTOWN AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

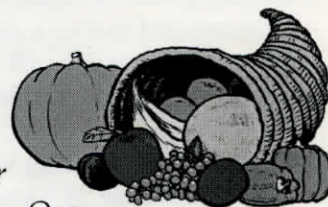
The President's Message

by Roger Grigson

The holidays are upon us, and it is a busy season for the Downingtown Area Historical Society. We are sponsoring a community open house on Saturday, December 4 and co-sponsoring the Chamber of Commerce Holiday Party on December 9. We are eager to show our progress and urge each of you to attend. We need to decorate the house for the two December occasions. If you can possibly help, show up at the Ashbridge House at 9 am on Saturday, November 27.

We encourage you to think of us when planning your Christmas giving list. Our new book on Downingtown with all of the new photos, has been a great hit and helps us maintain the Ashbridge House. We also have our new 2005 calendar. Limited amounts of the Afghan/throws are still available.

May you all have a wonderful holiday season!



Announcement of new publication

The Uwchlan Township Historical Commission is publishing a collection of Civil War letters, written by William and Joseph Downing and sent to their sister, Sarah, who lived in Lionville. The letters continued until death of Sarah in 1863. The book also contains some background history of the Civil War and the battles engaged in by the brothers.

Susannah Brody, remembered by members for her living history presentation of stories of the Revolution at a past annual dinner, has agreed to present a program for us on these letters.

The book costs \$20 and can be picked up at our open house on December 4, on Sunday, December 5 from 2-4 pm at the John Cadwalader House, 21 N Village Avenue in Lionville. It will also be available at our new walk-in market at Milltown on Sunday, December 12.

Our Website: Thanks to the diligent efforts of Jay Byerly, DHS has an attractive, informative and expanded-upon website which is connected to several Chester County links by simply keying in "downingtown historical society" or <http://www.downingtownhistoricalsociety.org>

The Turnpike Times, ©2003 Downingtown Area Historical Society. Articles and information on events of historical interest welcomed, subject to editorial revision and approval. Send articles to DHS, P.O. Box 9, Downingtown, PA 19335. Membership: \$10 individual; \$15 family; \$5 senior, \$3 student.

Officers: Roger Grigson, president; Ernie Jameson, vice president; Carol Grigson, secretary; Wesley Sollenberger, treasurer. Board: Jay Byerly, Lauren Fagan, George Gale, Harry Helms, Bob Kahler, Dr. Richard Lehr, Ruth Lowe, Pam Nicolini, and Thomas Roberts. *The Turnpike Times* Editors: Carol Grigson and Ruth Lowe.

The Downingtown Area Historical Society Market Day!

By Carol Grigson

This year the Downingtown Area Historical Society will hold a "market day", Sunday, December 12th. The location will be the Milltown Market in Downingtown. Great last minute gifts pertaining to Downingtown will be available! Gift ideas for natives or newcomers!

- The Downingtown Afghan is very popular and priced at \$55 (with supplies limited).
- The 2005 Downingtown Calendar is ready to be hung on the wall and is \$10.
- *Downingtown* by Bruce Mowday is in its second printing and makes a great read for \$20.
- Bags with candles (50 cents) and bases (50 cents) will be available for those not able to pre-order.
- *Dear Sister*, a book of Civil War letters sent to Sarah Downing of Lionville, just published by the Uwchlan Historical Commission for \$20.00

Thank you for your interest and participation in this project. The proceeds of this sale enable the historical society to pursue many projects, especially continuing the restoration of the Ashbridge House, its future headquarters and research facility.

Stop by and check out the Milltown Market and the Historical Society Booth!

Downingtown Chamber Christmas Party

By Carol Grigson

Several years ago, when the Historical Society first acquired the Ashbridge House, the Downingtown Area Chamber of Commerce braved the elements and held a meeting at the Ashbridge House. Those who attended that day will not easily forget the bitter cold, the condition of the house, and the pigeons flying in the attic.

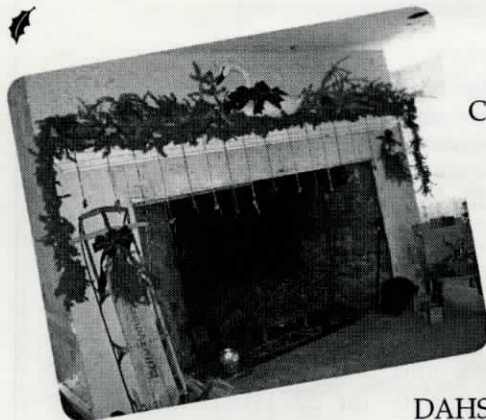
It, therefore, gives us great pleasure, to be cosponsoring the Chamber Christmas Party this December 9. (We are also a member of the Chamber.) As the Chamber represents the various elements of the Community, so, too, does the Historical Society.

Though the house is not completely finished, the outside has been repointed, a new roof was laid, and 5 chimneys were rebuilt. The inside has gone through a total transformation. We have new heating and air conditioning systems, new windows, completely new interior walls, a sprinkler system, an alarm system, electricity and water. Walls are being primed and painted; woodwork is being scraped of 17 or more layers.

A decorating committee has made plans to show the house in all its splendor. We are excited to be able to be the location for this Christmas party to show everyone what has happened the last few years and share our hopes for the future.

A HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE!

At this wonderful time of year, come celebrate the holidays and the opening of the Ashbridge House, for the first time in several years.



Tours of the House

Free Refreshments

Carolers from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Period Costumes

Wonderful Decorations

The date for the celebration is
Saturday, December 4

From 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

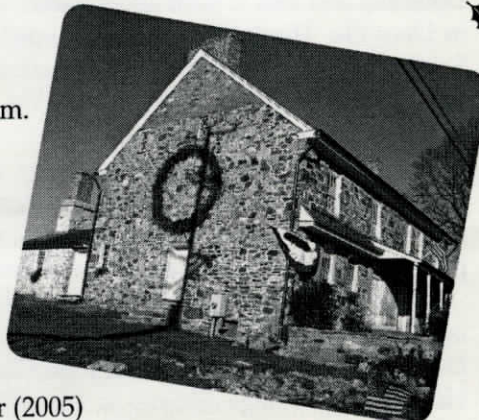
Also available :

DAHS Third Annual Historic Calendar (2005)

DOWNINGTOWN book, Bruce Mowday and the Downingtown Area Historical Society

Downingtown Afghan of Historic Sites

Individual orders of Luminaria



The Downingtown Area Historical Society Luminaria Sale in progress!

Continuing the tradition started many years ago, the Downingtown Area Historical Society is again sponsoring Luminaria.

The Society provides the candles and bags for the Downingtown "Candle Lighting Ceremony". A growing number of subdivisions in the area use the DAHS as the source for their candle lighting supplies. Orders are currently being accepted by your neighborhood block captain. If you do not have a neighborhood representative and would like more information about getting your neighborhood involved, please contact 610-269-1167.

A white "waxed" finish bag with candle is sold as a set. A separate base (referred to as a Lumabase®) has been designed as a way to stabilize the candle and a nonflammable additive has been added to prevent the plastic from burning. Use this product in lieu of sand for easy clean up.

• Bag with candle = 50 cents

• Base = 50 cents

Pickup will be more flexible this year, as we have use of Milltown Market on both Friday and Saturday before the parade. Calls will again be made telling people when to pick up the candles.

We appreciate the interest and participation in this project. The money raised from this project enables the Historical Society to pursue many projects, especially continuing the restoration of the Ashbridge House, its future headquarters and research facility.

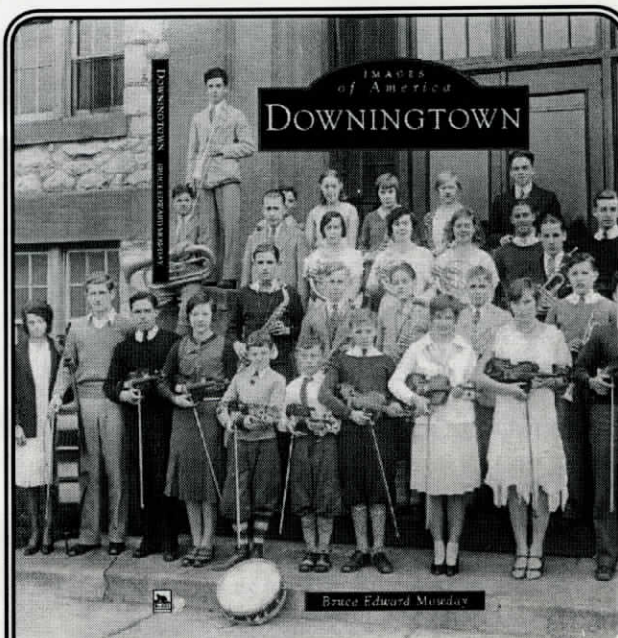
2005 DUES INCREASE

Everything, including postage, has risen for the past twenty years, but your dues to the Historical Society have stayed the same. For your dues, you receive a newsletter four times a year, are invited to speakers several times a year, and are invited to the functions of the Historical Society.

Looking at the costs, of particularly the newsletter, the Board of Directors voted on November 8, the first dues increase in 20 years. These new rates will be reflected in the invoice you receive in January, 2005.

Students:	\$05.00
Sr. Citizen	\$10.00
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00

No one likes the idea of raising the dues, but the reality is that none of our expenses have stayed the same price for the last 20 years.



Images of Downingtown

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WHO REMEMBERS?


By Carol Grigson

From copies of the "Downingtownt Manufacturing News" of June and July, of 1943, we get small capsules of life in Downingtown. World War II had been raging in Europe since 1939, with the Americans joining in 1941. By 1943, the only allied troops fighting in Europe were those of the Russians. Everyone knew that eventually, there would have to be an invasion from the West.

For those too young to remember, Russia was our ally. She also was entitled to manufactured goods under the Lend-Lease Program. Though Lend-Lease is usually remembered as the distributor of military items, Russia was also helped in the rebuilding of cities, as Germany withdrew from them.

Enter the importance of Downingtown! Building materials in 1943 included insulated wallboard, made from such items as wood, sugar cane, cornstalks, etc. To produce the wallboard required the use of special machinery, part of which was produced by the Downingtown Manufacturing Company. In June of 1943, Russia had been promised the machinery needed to make a Russian Wall Board Mill. The year 1943 was a pivotal one in the war for Russia, and Downingtown was hoping to help supply large orders of machinery needed for the newly liberated, and often destroyed, Russian homes.

Also in 1943, there was much discussion about the necessity for tanks to be used by the American military. Downingtown Manufacturing provided the turret tank rings on the M-3 and M-4 tanks. It was a matter of great pride that tanks with the Downingtown turret rings, were used in Africa and the South Pacific. Workers were being encouraged to produce them as fast as possible, so that the invasion of Europe could be hastened.

Also seen to be noteworthy in such publications was the inclusion of women working machinery in the war effort. Many of them began working in 1942, and the war issues are full of pictures of these new workers. 

Downingtownt Area Historical Society
P.O. Box 9
Downingtownt, PA 19335