

# GRAVE HAPPENINGS

Publication of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation- Vol. 3 July 2008

The JACQUELINE NEIN AWARD was given to Michael Beekman, a senior at Oley High School, for past service to the organization in addition to community service.

## Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation Officers

Rev. Gary J. Dierolf  
President

James McClean  
1st Vice President  
Attorney

Keith Schaeffer  
2nd Vice President

Ralph P. Lorah  
Treasurer

Cyntiha Jimenez  
Secretary

Website Address  
www.bcagp.org

## ASSOCIATION HANDBOOK OF HISTORIC FAMILY GRAVEYARDS

Included are 310 sites. 125 without surface evidence. Information includes over 200 site pictures. Township maps with locations of all Sites. **Cost of book is \$25 plus tax. S & H is \$3.50.**

Karen Brown  
Newsletter Editor

**OUR AIM...**

To maintain and preserve Berks County's neglected historic graveyards.

**WHO WE ARE...**

A group of civic leaders, professionals and interested citizens who share a common goal.

**WHAT WE DO...**

Plan, engineer and oversee preservation through:

- ✓ Initial clean-up
- ✓ Tombstone repairs/resetting
- ✓ Wall repairs
- ✓ Regular inspection and maintenance

**HOW?...**

- ✓ By organizing a network of civic groups and volunteers to perform necessary field work
- ✓ By educating the public about the importance of preserving these historic graveyards

**WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?**

- ✓ Support the Association by becoming a member
- ✓ Let the Association know of gravesites in order to keep our lists current
- ✓ Become a caretaker – visit one or more gravesites routinely to evaluate it current needs
- ✓ Give of your time to cut grass (weeds) and / or generally clean up a site
- ✓ Become a Board member. Please contact Gary Dierolf [pastor@christianlightministries.com](mailto:pastor@christianlightministries.com) , Ralph Lorah [waterlorah@aol.com](mailto:waterlorah@aol.com) or Keith Schaeffer [berksdowers@dejazzd.com](mailto:berksdowers@dejazzd.com) if interested
- ✓ You can tell us how you can help!

If not a current member, join us as we continue the work begun by so many before us.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Membership, \$15.00.
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation earmarked for the Association General Fund
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation to be used for the \_\_\_\_\_ gravesite
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Annual business or municipality membership, \$35
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Donation to be used in \_\_\_\_\_ municipality

Total Amount enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Checks to: B.C.A.G.P., PO box 3707, Reading, PA 19606

## DAY OF CARING 2008

The "Day of Caring" 2008, on which like every year, the fine students of Oley Valley High school spend the day using their own equipment and get together with BCAGP members to help clean several cemeteries in one day. These photos are before and after examples of the hard work and excellent community service these students contributed.



Before



AFTER

Good work and thanks Oley Valley High School!

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

BCAGP's annual meeting is scheduled for September. This meeting is opened to the public and all are welcome! The guest speaker and exact date are yet to be determined, but more details will follow.

## WORKS COMPLETED OR IN PROCESS

### BRECHT / BRIGHT CEMETERY BERN TOWNSHIP

*A special thanks to Ed and Nancy Graczyk who provided BCAGP with a detailed history of the Brecht / Bright family and their cemetery for this article.*

The Brecht / Bright Cemetery is located off Route 183 south of Bernville, PA. The cemetery contains five tombstones which are inscribed in German. In addition to the marked graves, a slave is believed to be buried here as well.

BCAGP is currently working with descendents of the Brecht / Bright family to place an iron fence around this cemetery. Restoration is scheduled for the Fall of 2008.

The tombstones of Johannes Brecht (6/2/1747 – 2/9/1834) aka *John Bright* and his wife, Anna Maria Leiss Brecht (1/15/1757 – 5/24/1842) are the first stones one encounters when entering the cemetery. Johannes Brecht was enlisted in the American Revolution as a private in the 4<sup>th</sup> company of Captain Sebastian Emrich of the Pennsylvania Militia.

Walking farther back into the cemetery, the tombstones of John Bright's parents, David Brecht(1719 -1783) and Sarah Gockley Brecht 1727 – 1796) are located.

The last tombstone is that of Jacob Himmelberger (1780 -1782), the nephew of John Bright. His mother was Margaret Brecht Himmelberger.

### SEIFERT CEMETERY UPPER BERN TOWNSHIP

Work on this cemetery is near completion. The trees have been removed in order to prevent damage to the tombstones and restored wall. The wall is almost finished.

## ZION CEMETERY BERN TOWNSHIP

*The following information about the Zion cemetery was contributed by Phil Whitmoyer. BCAGP is grateful to Mr. Whitmoyer for his assistance in learning about this cemetery's history.*

Zion Cemetery is located in the northwest portion of Bern Township at a road intersection that was once known as Bloomsburg. The Meeting House School, which is now a private residence, was built on the corner. Zion Church was situated next to the school and the cemetery was west of the church.

Zion Church was dedicated in 1852. However, the oldest legible gravestone in the cemetery is dated 1848 (Abraham Tobias – September 25<sup>th</sup> 1803 to May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1848). The burials in the cemetery consist primarily from the following families: Hart, Dundore, Sonnen and Loose.

During the late 1800's, there was a theological division within the Evangelical Church which affected Zion. As a result, membership declined. Eventually, the building fell into disrepair and was torn down.

BGAGP recently replaced the fence surrounding the Zion Cemetery (pictured below).



## UPCOMING PROJECTS

MOUNTAIN MARY – DIE BERG MARIA  
PIKE TOWNSHIP

One of the upcoming projects of the BCAGP will be to clean-up and maintenance the cemetery of Mary Young "Mountain Mary" which is located in Pike Township.

"Mountain Mary" was born Anna Maria Jung circa 1749 in Germany. She arrived in the US with her family around 1764 – 1773. Initially, she lived in Germantown until her father's death. She is believed to have moved to Berks County with her remaining family after the Battle of Germantown in 1777.

Legends about "Mountain Mary" have accumulated over the years. Historians have found it difficult to determine the degree to which some of the legends are reality or myth.

The legends of Mary's earlier life focus around events of the Revolutionary War. One account describes Mary as being the widow of a Revolutionary War soldier named Theodore Bentz. However, this account conflicts with Mary's last Will and Testament in which she refers to her status as a single woman (not widowed).

In her later years, Mary lived a solitary life as a self-sufficient farmer and folk healer. After the deaths of her mother and two sisters, Mary lived alone for thirty years. She died on November 16<sup>th</sup> 1819.

Although the exact details of Mary's life are uncertain, her status as a beloved figure in Berks County history is undisputable. In 1934, the Berks County Chapter of DAR erected a memorial plaque to honor Mary. The tradition of annually pilgrimages to her gravesite on the anniversary of her death was also revived in 1942.

### Works Cited

Parsons, William T. *Mountain Mary Legends* (Collegeville: Chestnut Books, 1989)

## **LEVAN CEMETERY MAXATAWNY TOWNSHIP**

The BCAGP will be restoring the Levan Cemetery this year. The restoration will involve: (1) locating the tombstone that overtime have been covered/concealed by the soil, (2) repairing the tombstones, (3) making the ground level inside the cemetery, and (4) restoring the wall that surrounds the cemetery.

## **KIEFFER AND SCHLEGEL CEMETERY RICHMOND TOWNSHIP**

BCAGP will be working to restore these two cemeteries over the next few months.

**The Kieffer private cemetery is located off Mertz Road near Lyons, PA.**

**The following is a list of burials from that cemetery:**

**Lydia Kieffer** – daughter of Peter & Elisabeth. January 1843- November 9<sup>th</sup> 1851.

**William Kieffer** – son of Peter and Elisabeth. Died March 30<sup>th</sup> 1848. Age 5 months.

**Esther Kieffer** - daughter of Peter & Elisabeth. Died April 16<sup>th</sup> 1844. Age 16 days.

**Elisabeth Kieffer nee Seibert** – wife of Abraham. February 20<sup>th</sup> 1774 – May 11<sup>th</sup> 1830.

**Abraham Kieffer** - December 26<sup>th</sup> 1768 – December 10<sup>th</sup> 1847. Age 78-11-15

**Isaac Kieffer** – January 8<sup>th</sup> 1806 – October 27<sup>th</sup> 1839

**Daniel** - son of Abraham Kieffer. January 2<sup>nd</sup> 1796 – June 6<sup>th</sup> 1855.

**Magdalena Kieffer** – daughter of Peter S & Magdalena. December 6<sup>th</sup> 1856 – January 31<sup>st</sup> 1860.  
Age 3-1-25

**Maria Anna** – daughter of Jacob & Anna Kieffer. April 11<sup>th</sup> 1825 – September 27<sup>th</sup> 1827. Age 3-5-16

**The Schlegel private cemetery is located near Fleetwood on the side of East Vine Street.**

**The following is a list of burials from that cemetery:**

**Elisabeth Schlegel** – Daughter of Samuel & Elisabeth. December 4<sup>th</sup> 1838 – January 22<sup>nd</sup> 1860.  
21-1-18

**Elisabeth Schlegel nee Hoch** – Wife of Samuel. October 13<sup>th</sup> 1805 – February 7<sup>th</sup> 1869. 63-3-24

**Samuel Schlegel** – July 9<sup>th</sup> 1801 – January 15<sup>th</sup> 1892. 90-6-6

**Lydia Anna Schlegel** – Daughter of Samuel & Elisabeth. December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1849 – August 1890. 40-8-13

**Fieldstone** - Johan C Schlegel

**Fieldstone** - Wife of Johan Christian Schlegel

**Esther Schlegel nee Keim** – Wife of Heinrich. December 28<sup>th</sup> 1771- December 21<sup>st</sup> 1843. 71-11-16. married September 23 1800

**Heinrich Schlegel** – July 15<sup>th</sup> 1779 – March 29<sup>th</sup> 1860. 80-8-14

**Ruben Schlegel** – Son of Jacob & Maria. May 6<sup>th</sup> 1802 – August 30<sup>th</sup> 1808. 3-3-24

**Magdalena Yoder** – Wife of Ruben. Daughter of Heinrich & Esther Schlegel. July 8<sup>th</sup> 1802 – March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1886. 83-7-23

**Sara** – Daughter of Jonathan & Catherine Herbein. August 18<sup>th</sup> 1839 – June 1<sup>st</sup> 1844