

## Kemp in Maxatawny



"Grave Happenings," is a collection of member contributed articles written to keep everyone advised of recent and on-going preservation activities, BCAGP needs, and incidental graveyard related material.

We are always looking for items of interest and are open to suggestions on future content.

Permission to reprint any materials herein is granted provided they are printed in their entirety and that BCAGP's author is cited.

Our newsletters are archived online on our website in full color

**Contributors Staff/Photos this issue:**

Meredith Goldey; Karla Hummel; Les Rohrbach; Keith Schaffer; Lara Thomas; Anne Wagner; Gary Koenig

# Letter from Les

Les Rohrbach – President

Wishing to learn tombstone repair Lara Thomas and Karla Hummel have attended courses led by among others Robert Mosko of Hanover, PA, one of the acknowledged experts in the field. During one of the sessions, they related the story of Maxatawny's Kemp graveyard which was threatened with the prospect of being replaced by a warehouse. Also mentioned was the state of the graveyard and its crumbling brick walls and fallen, precarious tombstones. Unexpectedly Robert offered to spend a day making repairs on site at minimal cost.

Robert's offer was presented to the Kemp descendant organization which successfully fought to preserve the graveyard. BCAGP was committed to covering this cost but the descendants stepped up to meet this obligation. It was a great opportunity to get significant work done much more quickly than BCAGP could hope to do by itself and without a great impact to our budget.



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Saturday November 4 was the day of Robert's arrival. In confirming plans early in the week Robert surprised us by saying the more people who showed up, the more work that could be completed. This transformed the day from an event in which he did the work and we assisted to one in which we notified our entire membership and asked for volunteers. Since one of our members works for the *Reading Eagle*, our call for volunteers wound up in the newspaper. We had a wonderful turnout on a nice day and met a number of great new contributors.

The day was too cold for broken tombstone pieces to be mortared or epoxied together but that was the only limitation on what was otherwise a very successful day. Numerous tombstones were dug out, straightened, and reset in a base of marble chips.

When tombstones are discovered laying horizontally underground, digging them out can be tedious as we must delicately find the top, search for the 4 sides, then dig out around and under it before we can lift and extract it. Robert demonstrated a technique using a tripod that required much less digging and pulled a sizable tombstone right out of the ground. He also demonstrated lifting a heavy tombstone base using the tripod to permit leveling the ground beneath before repositioning the base.

All in all we had a very successful day with a strong turnout and a number of new helpful participants. Quite a few tombstones were straightened in a way that should last. Heavy lifting was demonstrated and completed. More work remains, especially dealing with heavy pieces, but the Kemp graveyard took a step toward its former dignity.

## Letter to BCAGP members:

The first meeting of the 2024 year is a time to plan for the year ahead. We need ideas from all BCAGP members & invite you to attend the Board & Membership meeting on Sunday, January 21 at the Oley Legion at 1 PM.

Many projects are being proposed by the Board for 2024. The following lists some of the most important:

- DeTurk #2 - build two walls; approximate cost \$28,750 unless stones are donated
- Guldin, Oley - repointing
- Kline/Close, Exeter - repair/replace gate; address ash tree issue
- Hunter/Kemp, Oley - repairs to all 4 walls
- Rothermel 1, Maiden creek - rebuild left side of front wall
- Keim, Pike - tombstone straightening/repairs
- Knabb, Oley - tombstone straightening/repairs

We need input from our members. We rely on your talents, resources & support to help with our projects. If you are unable to attend our meeting on January 21, please take the time to respond via email to [bcagp@bcagp.org](mailto:bcagp@bcagp.org)

Your ideas are important for the Board to consider the work that needs to be done to preserve family cemeteries in Berks County. Your input is important.

Thank you for your help & we hope to see you at our meeting on Sunday, January 21st at the Oley Legion, 1PM

Sincerely,

BCAGP Board Members

# SET IN STONE

## Karla Hummel

Several years ago, Keith Schaeffer and I had the privilege of visiting the Leiby burial ground in Greenwich Township. None of our other members had seen it, so we planned a road trip for myself, Les Rohrbach, Lara Thomas and descendent Juli Winkler. Fortunately the former property owner, Lester Miller, offered us a ride to the site in his golf cart or I, for one, wouldn't have made the hike! This raises the first question about the Leiby. Why was the burial ground so far from the original homestead? It lies rather farther away than is the norm. Although Mr. Miller and Lara could chat merrily in the PA German dialect, they found no rationale for the location.



Memorial placed by the Leiby Family in the 1950

and stored. It was returned decades later to what was presumed to be the gravesite after significant tree removal and bulldozing was completed. Is this the original location? A neighbor had the area dowsed and stated that there were 6 graves at the site. We dowsed again and had similar results although the ground disturbance could have an impact.

In the 1950s, Leiby family members approached the Millers asking to place another tombstone for their patriarch, Friedrich Leiby, at the grave. Although that stone reads, "Here lies the body of..," we have found no record indicating that he was, in fact, buried on the property. The Millers were kind enough to surround the stones with a metal fence.

Hence, we left the site with many more questions than answers. Is it the exact location from which the stone was moved many years before being replaced? Why is it so far from the homestead? Are there other graves there? Who was/were IA KL? Where is Friedrich Leiby actually buried? It will take a stroke of luck to answer any of these.

Mr. Miller is the most knowledgeable about this site, having been raised on the property and recalling his father's tales of the lone tombstone. This is a fieldstone, roughly but legibly carved, with the date 1755 beneath a rectangle in which the capital letters IA and KL are separated by a single dot. This raises the question of who was intended to lie beneath the stone. We have found no evidence indicating whether these letters represent a single individual or perhaps, husband and wife. Obviously, the final L could stand for Leiby but the records show no one with the initial K. The letters I and J were essentially interchangeable so IA could also mean JA.

At some point in the mid-1900s the stone was removed



Photo of the craved field stone.

# Veteran Focus

## Johan Nicholas Kutz

Lara Thomas – Secretary



Photo of the Kutz Graveyard in 2009.

Our veteran for this issue of the newsletter is a bit of a conundrum. I've already shared findings of when a veteran's marker is in the wrong place, as with Lawrence/Lorentz Drescher in April of 2023. His veteran's marker is in the Trexler burial ground while his grave is about four miles away in Alburdis, Zion Lehigh's graveyard. For this veteran's article we have neither tombstone, nor concrete proof of active service, but plenty of confusion.

Research for this article is so fascinating (to some of us) in that these are individuals who have become very real to our members. We have learned about George Kemp, the Levans, the Siegfrieds, the Grims. Maxatawny Township has the second highest concentration of historical burial grounds of all the townships and boroughs in Berks County. It is

second only to Oley. Oley has so many due to its early settlement and then the blessing of continued farming combined with very active historic preservation statutes in place. Maxatawny has early settlement with

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## Join us in the field!

BCAGP has a good-sized membership base, but we will always value new hands in the graveyards. Just what is involved in cleanups that you might enjoy? Everyone simply assumes the job they are comfortable with!

- Using weedwhackers, loppers cut the vegetation back.
- We remove all of the trimmings to a pile outside the wall or load it for transport.
- We then examine stones and take inventory of needed repairs to stones or walls.
  - We conduct searches for broken pieces.
  - We clean the stones with D/2
  - Repair stones

Les will send out emails with full details and they will be also be posted to Facebook.

Please bring tools and work gloves with you.

Some suggested tools are: Weedwhackers, Loppers or Clippers, Rakes.



Photo of the Kutz Graveyard in 2010.

Zimmerman family plots, near the debated Maxatawny warehouse project. At present only three interments can be proven. Those are of the Johan Nicholas the grandson who died in 1831, his wife Susanna nee Sharadin (died 1847), and the young boy James Reifinger who died in 1846. While the veteran's marker is currently placed at Nicholas the grandson's tombstone, it is his father Nicholas the II that is the veteran.

Johan Nicholas Kutz the veteran was one of six sons of Johan Nicholas the immigrant and may have had a sister as well. The family was present in Pennsylvania and what would become Berks since at least 1729 when the first of several land warrants were purchased. Contrary to what might be found on Find a Grave, there is yet no concrete evidence of Nicholas's dates of birth. 1730 is commonly found on the internet but I could not locate the source in the time I researched. I will use it here with that caveat. By that point his father had already accumulated enough land that when Nicholas the first had his probate recorded in 1749 his children inherited 572 acres of land, goods and even £87 in cash. A cow was worth £4 in 1749, so Nicholas I left the family well provided for.

Nicholas the veteran must have married sometime around 1756 because in October of 1757, he appears in the records of Reverend Daniel Schumacher as husband and father with wife Eva Catharina in the baptism of their daughter Eva Catharina who is stated to be 7 weeks old. We know his wife was Eva Catharina Probst/Brobst thanks to a mention in his father-in-law's will. Daughter Elizabeth was born in 1760 and namesake Nicholas (the third) was born in 1764 with Maria Dorothy in 1765. Another daughter Susannah followed in 1768.

continued farming but did and does have more development due to being on the main thoroughfare between Reading and the Allentown-Easton area. Kutztown is a university town, a home to a robust heritage site and community, and often the butt of pronunciation jokes. We can blame it all on Johan Nicholas Kutz.

And there begins the problem. Which Johan Nicholas Kutz? There were at least three that inherited and lived in Maxatawny Township; father, son and grandson, all. All purported to be buried in the Kutz family burial ground located off Hottenstein Road. This burial ground is located less than a mile from the Kemp, the Hottenstein, the Jacob Levan, and the possible

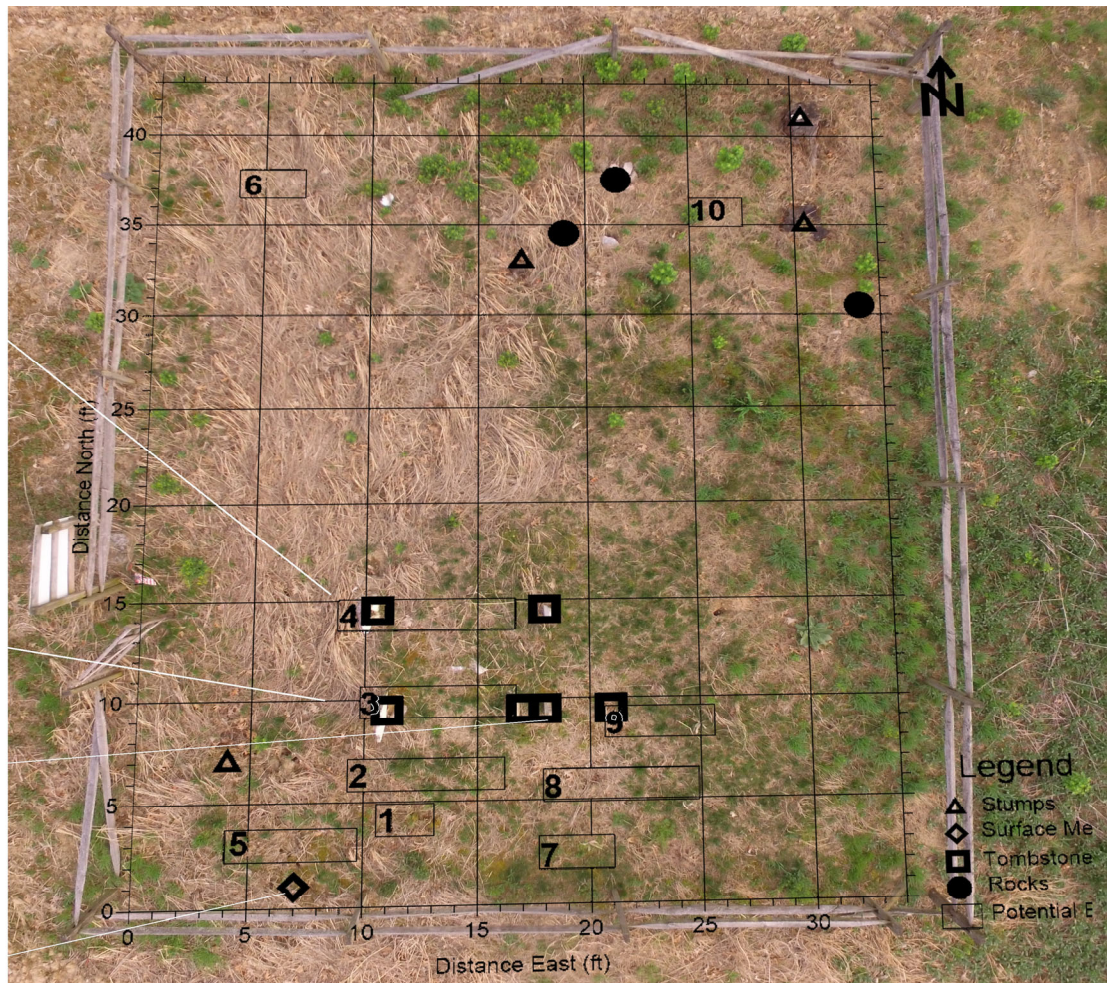


Photo of the Kutz Graveyard this Fall 2023

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1768 is notable because Nicholas, our veteran, appears in government records. A tax record survives listing brothers Jacob, George, Nicholas and Adam Kutz all paying taxes on Maxatawny property. These four together have 610 acres, about 40 more than what was originally left to them. Of Nicholas's 170 acres, 50 have been cleared and used for farming. He was doing quite comfortably with two work horses, a mare, four cattle and six sheep. Children Johannes and Rosina followed to the family in 1774 and 1777.

1777 is an important year. George Kemp is captain of a unit of men in the 2nd Battalion of Pennsylvania Militia which includes his friends and neighbors. Dewalt Wink, Peter & John Levan, as well as Adam and Nicholas Kutz were all paid 7 shillings and 6 pence for their service. However, the PA Archives also record Nicholas as having paid a muster fine of 7 shillings 6 pence. Did he not appear when he was supposed to? Did he leave early, or muster late due to the birth of little Rosina? He would have likely been in his late 40s but service was mandatory up until age 53. We may never know. Whatever the reason, Nicholas's VA card states it is NOT proof of active service, unlike most that are found during research. We have a contradiction of a record of pay



Result of GPR with each number representing a burial

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yet a fine of the same amount and an unusual veteran card.

Perhaps we will never know if Nicholas drilled and served under George Kemp. Nicholas is still counted as a veteran per the rules of the Sons of the American Revolution, however. He qualifies due to his support in another way. In 1779 Pennsylvania needed more funds to support its militia and regular troops. There was no federal tax in existence to provide for food, clothing, and rudimentary housing of the soldiers. States had to provide this, usually by having commanding officers pay for the supplies and then submit (and hope) for reimbursement. Here, we can thank the accountants and bookkeepers of the world. The 1779 tax known as "Register of Property of the Inhabitants of Berks County for Raising the Supplies for the Year 1779" clearly shows that Nicholas Kutz paid taxes above and beyond those normally scheduled, to support independence.

Nicholas appears again in normal tax records in the 1780s. Unfortunately, his next appearance in records is his will and probate. Date of death is recorded May 1790. His friends and neighbors George Kemp and Jacob Levan acted as witnesses to his will. His elder son and namesake Nicholas inherited the family farm in addition to wooded acres in Greenwich Township with four horses, wagons, plows, harrows, but "bound to in particular to pay for the... bequests and give security to the payment thereof to his mother, brother and sisters... of £850 gold or silver" equally in installments over several years.

Additionally provisions are set so that if heir Nicholas (who's now married) finds he cannot have his widowed mother continue to dwell in the same house as he and his family, he must build her another house, guarantee her half of the kitchen garden, 15 pounds of flax, 15 pounds of tow, 100 pounds of pork, 100 pounds of beef, a bushel of salt, 10 bushels of wheat and another 10 of rye, 5 bushels of potatoes, a choice of cow and 2 pigs from the stable EACH YEAR. Either way, widowed Eva Catherine was to receive £150 per year for the remainder of her life.

The farm was successful enough to do it, as well. Inventory lists: flax, linen, a stillyard, apple mill, 65 bushels of wheat, 13 bushels of rye, 15 bushels of buckwheat, 5 beeves, 2 steers, a sow and 4 large swine, bonds and notes, on and on. The total of all the movables comes to over £1287. Probate records don't end until 1818 where payments "to the widow " continue, disproving those that think Eva Catherine died soon after him.

Nicholas was the son of a successful man who left a sound legacy for his own children and widow. Accounts continued for 28 years after his death so obviously there were funds. So where is his tombstone? Morton Montgomery the well-known Berks historian of old states that four generations were buried at the Kutz family burial ground. Church records exist for baptisms of his children, but not of his burial. BCAGP's Karla Hummel probed every foot plot after Anne Wagner's find of the child James Reifinger's buried tombstone, all of us hoping to find more. Kutztown University completed ground penetrating radar here in 2019. While there are more than three graves, there are not enough for four generations.

Perhaps any other graves or tombstones are lost to time, toppled and unknowingly plowed over before the current boundaries were set. Fencing was not always present and we know the area once was overgrown with trees. Nicholas's record of service may be murky. His tombstone may be lost. But we do our best to remember him and mark his likely resting spot.



## Clean Ups

September 27th— A good group went out to get the resting place of Revolutionary War veteran Abraham Deturk (1752-1829), son of Johan Deturk, in better shape. A modestly sized family burial ground, it suffered loss of stone from its walls by past generations.

BCAGP has been working with Deturk/Deturck descendant Barbara Deturck Witman on a plan to make the space more presentable. Today she kindly paid for someone to take away all the cut Johnson grass. But she is looking for support from like minded people to gather funds to rebuild the missing 2 walls. ([www.deturkfamily.com](http://www.deturkfamily.com))

We also mentioned the Deturk Family Cemetery/Deturk 2 earlier this year when the Johnson grass was particularly depressing. You might remember how the huge granite stone disappeared in a month. Today, after herbicide and cursing, it was cut back.



Deturk 2 with Johnson Grass.

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Hill—September 12

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Grim—November 12th

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## Our Mission

We strive to preserve and maintain the historic Berks County graveyards in Eastern Pennsylvania. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Historic Burial Places Preservation Act (1994) provides for the preservation of historic burial places, tombs, monuments and gravestones and imposes penalties for violations. Research supports the existence of over 300 historic graveyards in Berks County of which approximately 120 remain with some sort of visible surface evidence. The BCAGP is working aggressively to preserve these historic grave sites for future generations.



Kutz—November 12th



Nein—November 20th



Keim—November 20th



Kieffer December 1st



Hunter/Kemp—December 5th



Hoch/Deturk/Shenkel—December 5th

# JOIN OR DONATE TODAY!

If you're not a current member, please join us in preserving and maintaining our historic graveyards. If you do not wish to be a member at this time but you are interested in contributing support for a specific graveyard, please indicate that graveyard on the form below. We also appreciate contributions to the general fund.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2024

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Save a tree! Please e-mail me the newsletter.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Annual Membership, \$15

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Family Annual Membership (residing in same household), \$25

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality or Business Annual Membership, \$35

### Additional Donation Earmarked for:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ General Fund

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Burial Ground

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Municipality

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

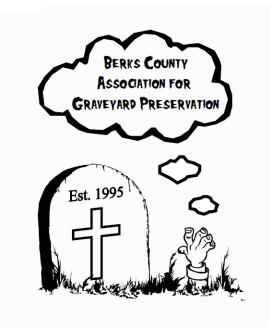
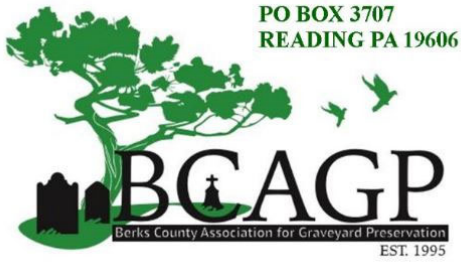
- **Membership runs a calendar year (January to December).**
- Membership dues paid after October 1st will be applied to the next membership year.
- This form is also available on our website in the internet edition of the newsletters which can be printed.
- The official registration and financial information of Berks County Association of Graveyard Preservation may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.
- Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is a registered 501 (c) (3). Please check with your tax advisor as to the deductibility of your contribution.

### Mail Checks to:

BCAGP

PO Box 3707

Reading, PA 19606



Don't forget! Renew your membership for 2024!  
Attend the Annual Meeting on January 21st (details inside)

[WWW.BCAGP.ORG](http://WWW.BCAGP.ORG)

Check our web site for details for scheduled clean ups, meeting dates and for internet edition newsletter archives in full color!

## BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION

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Don't forget to check our Facebook and Instagram for updates and more photos.

