Epitaphs ...

Publication of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation-Vol. 5 February 1999

PRESERVE OUR PAST, CREATE OUR FUTURE - BERKS - A HISTORIC MILLENNIUM COUNTY

ASSOCIATION RELEASES HANDBOOK OF HISTORIC FAMILY GRAVEYARDS

This 280 page unbound informational publication was compiled by Jacqueline B. Nein, Cynthia Jimenez and Joan Texter and will be available at our March 9th general meeting at Lorane Elementary School Cafeteria at 7 P.M. The cost of the book is \$25 plus tax and \$3.50 P. & H. Orders received or books sold before March 10 will be discounted to \$22 plus tax for PA residents. Included are 310 sites: 125 without surface evidence. Information includes over 200 site pictures, township maps with locations of all sites with and without surface evidence, history and evaluation of the sites and inscriptions. After March 10 copies will be available at the Recorder of Deeds Office on the third floor of the Berks County Services Center, the Berks County Historical Society and the Berks County Conservancy. Other organizations, townships and/or businesses who wish to sell books on consignment should contact the association office.

This compilation is dedicated to our ancestors and to the precious heritage and culture they initiated for us in Berks County. Many individuals have been involved in a continuing commitment to discovering and preserving information about our early history and the early families who traveled to America seeking out a better way of life, a life of freedom and liberty and opportunity. This compilation is also dedicated to the many genealogists and historians who have added to the volume of information so industriously: researching, compiling, recording and/or sharing the information with others. To share with others is the true essence of our heritage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

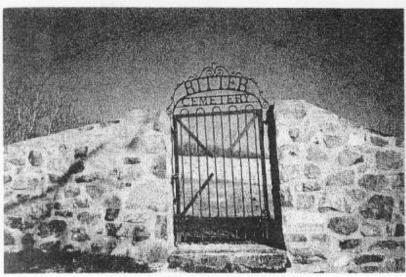
This publication would not have been possible without the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation and the many people who contributed so generously of their time, energies and their expertise. The organization was formed in 1993 and incorporated in 1994.

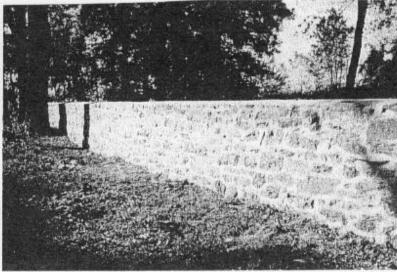
In this short span of time the preservation activities and accomplishments of this organization are impressive, and the inclusion of the location of each historic grave site on public record is likely the single greatest accomplishment. In 1997 representatives of the Association met with Ellie Antione, Berks County Recorder of Deeds to request her assistance in preventing the obliteration and desecration of any more historic family graveyards. As possible avenues were explored, and other county departments contributed ideas, we had a plan in place for recording the location of these sites and having them readily available as a matter of public record. The Berks County Planning Commission uses parcel identification numbers (P.I.N.). The Recorder of Deeds needed deed book and page numbers. Collecting this information for each site was no small task. Ninety percent of this information was made available to us by the untiring efforts of many township officials and employees. We strongly encourage each township to buy their own copy and to become a member of the BCAGP. The process provides for continual updating through our annual newsletter.

Sites with surface evidence are obvious, and we appreciate and thank the land owners who have cooperated and protected these sites. The location of many sites without surface evidence came as a surprise to many other land owners. All of these sites were found because research and historic documents and records gave evidence or clues to their existence. Certainly Laurel Miller's 1992 publication A Genealogical Guide to Berks County Private Cemeteries served as the primary source of information, putting together in one publication the works of so many earlier researchers.

Local township historians serving as guides for field trips enabled our evaluators to locate many unmarked sites and to identify and meet and/or confer with the owners.

The Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is grateful for the tremendous support they have received from the entire Berks County community. Networking with other non-profit organizations and government officials has enabled us to achieve our preservation and protection efforts much more quickly. Thank you, Berks County! The Association looks forward to your continued support and cooperation.





RITTER #2 SITE-EXETER

BERTOLET # 3 SITE-OLEY

1998 PROGRESS REPORT

Three hundred and ten historic family and/or early community graveyards have been located in Berks County, one hundred and twenty five without surface evidence. Five of these sites have not been evaluated: two because of accessibility and three because we have not yet received permission from the owners. All masonry bills have been paid but descendant contributions are still outstanding. These contributions are what perpetuates the preservation program.

- The walls of the Ritter #2 site in Exeter Township were completely rebuilt by stone mason Keith Schaffer. The cost was \$16,000; \$6,000 from a community block grant and the remainder from organizational fund raisers and hopefully descendants.
- •A rug marker was received from the Department of Veterans Affairs for service in the War of 1812 for Isaac Ritter, September 19, 1782-November 6, 1851. This marker will be set in front of his broken stone this spring.
- The Kurtz family put a cement facade around the crumbling stone wall which was damaged from the construction of Rt. 422. The wall was capped and a metal bar installed around the top. The site is in Marion Township.
- •A stone retaining wall with two 6' wings was built by stone mason John Schrawder at the Herman/Sassaman site in Maxatawny at a cost of \$7000, with a block grant of \$3000. Most of the descendant balance is still outstanding.
- •The wall was repaired, capped and pointed at the Bertolet #3 site in Oley by stone mason Nat Fetter.
- •The Spohn site in Greenwich Township is completed. The walls were rebuild and pointed and all tombstones reset. Descendant contributions are still needed.
- Emergency wall and cap repairs were made at the Kline/Close site in Exeter Township by stone mason Keith Schaffer. Project was financed by a trust with First Union. More descendant and/or block money is needed to remove the cracked stucco and repair the stone underneath.
- •A candidate for Eagle Scout selected the Siegfried site in Maxatawny as his project. The owner is considering financing wall repairs. A huge graveyard was discovered outside the walls.
- •Approximately 150 students were involved in the United Way Youth Day of Caring. They included students from Blue Mountain Academy working at the Rickenbach in Ontelaunee, Holy Name working at the Reichert/Dum in Richmond and Kutztown Area and the Future Farmers from Oley High School working on sites throughout their districts. The services of these students is invaluable and we look forward to their participation again in 1999.
- •All wall construction and stone resetting done by Meno Burkholder is now complete at St. Henry's or the Reichert/Dum site in Richmond. This site has temporarily been adopted by Mt. Zion Church Cub Pack 180 and Boy Scout Troop 104.
- •Wall and cap repairs are now complete at the Schneider site at Limekiln. A second gate entrance should be stoned in to keep stray cattle out.
- Blue Mountain Academy again cleaned up at the Rickenbach this fall and began to rebuild the dry stone wall.
- •VCR footage of the Antietam was recorded by graphic art students from the Antietam School District and 4 juniors from Exeter Township School District. George Meiser conducted a guided tour from the dam to the Lincoln/Neukirk saw mill property. The BCAGP sponsored the trip. An attempt was made to find the exact site of the mill and evidence of the prerevolutionary irrigation system. Tony Mattessa, historian and John Theisen, Exeter engineer, helped with the investigation.
- •Marsha Hess of the Senior Center in Birdsboro took Daniel Boone High School Interact Club on a days work party. In addition to caring for the McGowan in Union Township they located a "Millard" tombstone at another site on the same

property. (Mordecai Lincoln's second wife was a Millard.) The group also evaluated Joanna Furnace for evidence of grave sites.

•Nelson Farr, board member; Ed Rodwell, director of Veteran Affairs; and Jane Meeks, City of Reading Dept. of Public Works met at the Fix/Gerber site this summer to identify resources to remedy destructive conditions. A crew from the Berks County Prison did a very thorough job cutting and removing undesirable growth inside and out. Finances are still needed to repair the collapsed wall caused by the swale created by Penn Dot when they constructed the by-pass.

•We were informed by Ed Rodwell that the county commissioners allocated extra money for the maintenance and repair

of historic family graveyards where veterans are buried. We hope this allocation will occur each year.

- Evaluated the yard at the Irey mansion in Amity Township and discovered an activity pattern for approximately 232 burials in 13 rows. Parts of this divining evaluation were reported on Channel 5. We moved across the street to St. Gabriel's cemetery to compare divining activity at a site with surface evidence. The reporter was amazed at the accuracy when he tried the rods.
- •We received a letter from Forino Developers supporting our efforts to include sites without surface evidence as a matter of public record.
- We were consulted in sub division planning by surveyors and developers.
- A list of publications for sale is included in this issue.
- · We will be adding to the information on our web site.
- · Michael Brady repaired vandalized tombstones at the Becker site in Tilden Township and is working on repairing the hole in the wall at the Rothermel site in Maidencreek Township.
- •This spring Michael Brady will be repairing and resetting tombstones at the Fix/Gerber site between Rt. 10 and the 422 by-pass. Anyone interested in learning the technique and/or helping please call 779-3464 for more information.

•Our public display in the 2nd floor corridor of the Service Center is continually being updated.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation will be held Tuesday, March 9, 1999, 7 P.M. at the Lorane Elementary School Cafeteria on Rittenhouse Drive, Exeter Township. The new publication of the association will be sold at a discount. A slide presentation will be given showing achievements in 1998 and sites that need attention in 1999. Officers will be elected. Refreshments will be served. The public is always cordially invited.

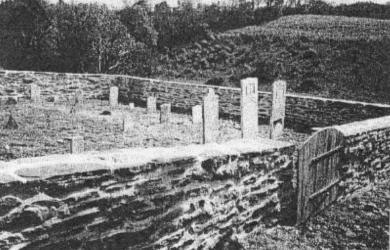
General meetings are held the second Tuesday during the months of March and November at this time and location. Please note that we have discontinued the May and September general meetings until further notice. Anyone interested in serving on the board this year should contact the E.D. at 779-3464.

NEGLECTED HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS WHICH ARE NOT YET ADOPTED *(permission not granted)

Ontelaunee Township: Exeter Township: Oley Township:

Hechler/Esterly* Guldin, Weidner #1* Richmond Township: Reichert/Dum

Rickenbach



SPOHN SITE-GREENWICH KURTZ SITE-MARION

BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION BUDGETED AND ACTUAL STATEMENTS OF CASH RECEIPTS AND CASH DISBURSEMENTS

YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1999 AND 1998

	BUDGET 1999	ACTUAL 1998	BUDGET 1998
BEGINNING CASH BALANCE - JANUARY 1	\$25,797.03	\$31,214.50	\$31,214.50
CASH RECEIPTS:		accordence.	
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND DUES	11,000.00	11,026.00	14,000.00
CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS AND DUES	5,000.00	5,730.00	7,000.00
FUNDRAISING/OTHER	8,000.00	5,482,15	5,000.00
GRANTS	2,000.00	0.00	13,000.00
INTEREST INCOME	900,00	1521.87	1,000.00
TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS	28,900.00	23,760.02	40,000.00
CASH DISBURSEMENTS			
ADMINISTRATIVE:			
COPIES	50.00	34.92	50.00
FINANCIAL	200.00	100.00	200.00
MILEAGE	200.00	37.50	200.00
100000	300.00	110.51	300.00
PHOTOGRAPHY	350.00	219.19	350.00
POSTAGE	100.00	0.00	100.00
STATIONERY	-0.00 P 5000 G	253.80	600.00
SUPPLIES	500.00	198.92	300.00
TELEPHONE	300.00	120000000000000000000000000000000000000	100000000000000000000000000000000000000
MISCELLANEOUS	600.00	244.72	600.00
SUB-TOTAL ADMINISTRATION	2,600.00	1,197.56	2,600.00
HISTORIAN	50.00	0.00	50.00
FINANCE/FUND RAISING	1,000.00	764.96	1,000.00
LEGALMUNICIPAL	50.00	15.00	50.00
MAINTENANCE			
POSTAGE	10.00	0.00	10.00
COPIES	10.00	0,00	10.00
SUPPLIES	25.00	0.00	25.00
SUB-TOTAL MAINTENANCE	45.00	0.00	45.00
MEMBERSHIP	50.00	0.00	50.00
SOCIAL	60.00	41.16	50.00
PRESERVATION	3,000.00	26,668.28	36,000.00
PUBLICATIONS:			
BOOK	6,000.00	02000	722244
BROCHURES	0.00	0,00	100.00
ANNUAL REPORT	800.00	328.60	650.00
POSTAGE	350.00	141.93	250.00
SUB-TOTAL PUBLICATIONS	7,150.00	470.53	1,000.00
PUBLIC RELATIONS	100.06	20.00	100.00
RESEARCH	150.00	0.00	150.00
TOTAL CASH DISBURSEMENTS	14,255.00	29,177.49	41,095.00
CASH BALANCE - DECEMBER 31	\$38,442,03	\$25,797.03	\$30,119.50

We are thankful to many of you for your financial support, your donations in services and raw materials and your interest and concern. Please continue to provide this support. Community grant funds helped us complete three major masonry projects in 1998, providing \$13,000. Our preservation expenses in addition to this amount totaled \$26, 668.28.

You will notice in the 1999 budget the budgeted preservation amount is only \$3000. The preservation emphasis will be on the repair of tombstones. We will continue to promote major masonry projects in 1999 by asking the townships to apply for adequate community block grants and by encouraging owners and descendants to increase their financial support. Likely block grant projects will begin in 2000 or 2001. We will not be involved in major masonry improvements but the financial resources must be readily available. Please review this newsletter and all the accomplishments that have been made in 1998 and what is planned for 1999. Contributions and new members are needed to expand our program. Our organization has only existed for five years but we have accomplished much through the help of people like you.

Please help us make all of Berks County a historic millennium community - preserving the past and creating the future.

The Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is duly registered as a charatable organization with the Department of State, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

The Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is also recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a nonprofit organization under section S01(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

OFFICER NOMINEES FOR 1998

Executive Director: Jacqueline B. Nein, incumbent, is a graduate of West Chester State and Temple University. She is a retired teacher and department chairperson. She was honored by the Mahanatawny Chapter of the D.A.R. organizing community efforts to preserve historic graveyards. Jackie is a charter member of the BCGS and compiled and published the church records of First Reformed and Trinity Lutheran, Reading: and Schwarzwald Reformed. She has compiled the "9" and Dunkelberger family genealogies and helped restore the historic family graveyard near Limekiln.

Assistant Executive Director: Doreen Layman, Doreen and her husband live in the Lincoln/Neukirk home on Lorane Rd. Doreen graduated as a medical assistant from Springfield (MA) Technical Community College in 1965. In 1991 she earned her B. S. in Health Administration and in 1993 her Masters Degree in Education. She is currently employed as a financial advisor for Waddell & Reed Financial Services, Wyomissing, PA. She is a member of Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education.

Treasurer: Jacob Greene, grew up in Moylan, PA and graduated from Lehigh University in 1990 majoring in accounting. Jake worked for Ernst and Young from 1990 to 1992 and also worked as a cook for his grandparents at the Stonersville Hotel. From 1995 to 1997 he was an accounting manager for a Coating Development firm in Philadelphia. Presently he is working as a program analyst for Kissinger Associates who sell accounting software.

Secretary: Sandra Ruppert, served as secretary of the BCAGP previously and has been secretary of the annual Ruppert Reunion for the past ten years. The family graveyard including the stone wall was returned to a state of dignity, a very fitting tribute to these early Ruppert ancestors. Sandra has been involved in updating the family history. She serves as the Berks County Assistant Director of Election Services.

COMMUNITY BLOCK GRANTS NEW CYCLE BEGINS

The county community development office will be taking applications this March for a new three year cycle of community block grants. Townships and municipalities must apply to be considered! This year we had our first block grants in progress at 3 sites for a total of \$13,000.

Oue association will advise and help the townships through the process. Likely if the township grant is approved the funding would not be available the first year. It is important that the township asks for a realistic amount that will cover the entire cost of the project or that the township plans to supplement the grant with additional sources of revenue. We are suggesting that at least two bids are obtained from a stone mason before making application. We can help you do this. Contact us as soon as possible.

The township will have to assume responsibility for getting two bids on the contract, monitoring the work and arranging payment through the Community Development Office.

This is the time to take advantage of funding that can be available for your township for the neglected and forgotten historic family graveyards in your area. Please do not limit applications to the list below. Call our office at 779-3464 or Mr. Kenneth Pick at the Community Development Office at 478-6325.

MAJOR MASONRY PROJECTS FINANCES NEEDED

Cumru Township: High/Hoch Exeter Township: Kline/Close Hereford Township Bittenbender Long Swamp Township Trexler Maxatawny Township: Kemp, Levan Oley Township: Peters, deTurck Ontelaunee Township: Rickenbach Penn Township: Bright/Brecht Pike Township Keim City of Reading Fix/Gerber Ruscombmanor Township Miller

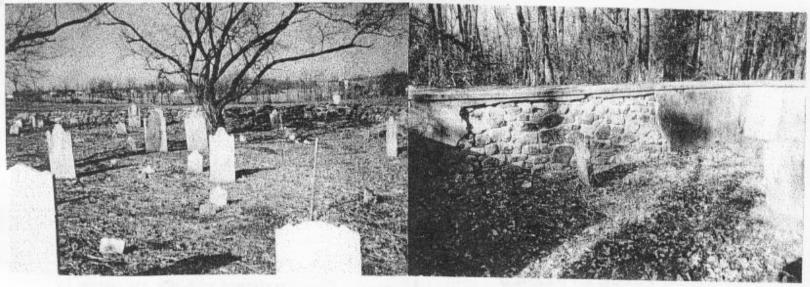
ENDOWMENT OPTION

You can endow an historic graveyard with our association by investing the principal and designating our group as the custodian of your site. We would bill the custodian of your trust and the interest would be used for maintenance and/or to have floral deliveries. A minimal custodial charge will be made by the association. We can not accept an endowment fund until all needed masonry repairs are made.



"Whenever you pass by the field where you have laid your ancestors look well thereupon, and you shall see yourselves and your children dancing hand in hand." Kahlil Gibeon

The past is the greatest teacher we have. It is the source of a great deal of stability in this country. It propels us in the right direction. It provides each individual with a surprisingly powerful emotional resilience from which we can begin to judge where we as individuals want to go. (Abstracted from Ken Burns' depiction of the Lewis and Clark "Corp of Discovery"



BERKSHIRE ENVIRONMENTAL JOINS THE INVESTIGATION

This summer a large historic grave site was discovered in the back yard of the Mordecai Lincoln home on Lincoln Road in Exeter Township. Another large graveyard was discovered encompassing all of the Lincoln Corporate Center. This site was mapped in the 1862 Atlas. A burial for a local Steiger resident in 1852 mentions an Exeter Cemetery. Burial patterns were found on the Lorane Elementary School playground continuing down past the railroad and also the entire South End Gun Club. Grave patterns were also detected in the yards of three other Lincoln properties. We know this was a very historic corner of Berks County and because the here the Antietam Creek flowed into the Schuylkill River this certainly had to be a hub of commerce, but to explain so many burials becomes a very difficult task.

Divining rods were used to locate these specific areas. The credibility of this process and the quantity of findings prompted us to contact Berkshire Environmental, Inc., an engineering firm specializing in geophysics. Berkshire donated their services and performed the following non-intrusive geophysical investigation for the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation. The purpose of the non intrusive study was to locate and delineate possible unmarked gravesites and to provide evidence that geophysics is a readily available scientific means of detecting unmarked graves. For this study, Berkshire integrated frequency- and time-domain electromagnetic induction and ground-penetrating radar (GPR) over a 5,400 square feet test area. A segment of the back yard of the Mordecai Lincoln home was selected for testing and was gridded in preparation.

A very complete report of this study is available at the association office. This same area was flagged using divining rods to detect a correlation between the results and the geophysical data. It would appear to the lay person that there is a very definite correlation. Of course an archeological dig might confirm the existence of a burial site. Berkshire Environmental and the BCAGP could not approve this intrusive process. It was recommended that we recruit a forensic expert to take a few core samples at locations selected by Berkshire. Berkshire would like more information before determining that the anomalies detected are part of a graveyard pattern. Research continues.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT

The BCAGP's letter of intent has been approved for a grant to amass a database of information about the pre-revolutionary irrigation system established on the three subdivisions of the Mordecai Lincoln tract in Exeter Township and to identify any historic family or community graveyard on the same Lincoln tract using only non-intrusive methods. A multigenerational team of community individuals and groups will research and study the evidence. Engineering, archaeology and history students would be an asset to the group. Another objective is to make a complete map of the irrigation system that connected the Antietam to the Little Hiester Creek. Deed research will be necessary and other early documents studied. This is a pilot program which, in the process, has unlimited opportunities for new educational experiences and discoveries. Anyone interested in participating should contact our office.

EXETER HISTORIC ALLIANCE

Some Exeter Township historic land owners and interested individuals have formed an Exeter Township Historic Alliance to share information, research the rich local history in this corner of Berks and to encourage the preservation of our heritage and culture.

BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION PUBLICATIONS LIST

EPITAPHS

HANDBOOK OF HISTORIC FAMILY GRAVEYARDS BERKS COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA (over 275 pages)

listing of over 300 historic family graveyards with locations, pictures & inscriptions when available 8 1/2 x 11 unbound, unpunched or unbound 3 ring punched \$25.00 (plus P&H \$3.50)

250 TH ANNIVERSARY - EARLY READING HISTORY (144 pages)

hard-bound: includes 150 pictures and maps \$30.00 (plus P&H \$4.00)

(TRINITY AND FIRST REFORMED INCLUDE EARLY RECORDS OF MANY BERKS CHURCHES) TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF READING, PA 1751-1904 (over 350 pages)

alphabetized and cross referenced baptisms, marriages and deaths: unbound \$46.00 (plus P&H \$4.50)

FIRST REFORMED OF READING, PA 1771-1905 (over 380 pages)

alphabetized and cross referenced baptisms, marriages and deaths: unbound \$55.00; (plus P&H \$4.50)

SCHWARZWALD REFORMED OF BERKS COUNTY, PA 1780-1927

unbound \$23.00; (plus P&H \$4.00)

INDEX TO THE 1860 CENSUS OF BERKS COUNTY, PA

contains over 7500 surnames - soft cover \$12.00 (plus P&H \$3.00)

1862 BERKS COUNTY LANDOWNERS ATLAS AND INDEX

8 X 11 bound soft cover \$35.00 (plus P&H \$3.00)

1976 BICENTENNIAL MAP OF BERKS COUNTY

many historical markings - by George Meiser IX - 23 x 34 folded \$5.00 (plus P&H \$2.00)

MUSICAL REMEMBRANCES (178 pages)

Profiles of Creative Berks Countians-Berksiana Foundation 1976 8 1/2 x 11 bound soft cover with musical scores \$5.00 (plus P&H \$4.00)

9'S BY THE NUMBERS 1737-1996 (almost 500 pages)

Family Genealogy of Johann Caspar & Barbara Nine (Nein, Neun, Neuin) of Oley, Berks County 8 1/2 x 11; unbound \$48

PA residents add 6% sales charge: With multiple orders the maximum P. & H. fee is \$12.00. Mail all book orders to: B.C.A.G.P. 932 Franklin St. Wyomissing PA 19610

MEMBERSHIP & DONATION FORM

NAME		THE STREET WALL		
ADDRESS A	AND PHONE			
	\$15 Annual individ	lual membership; \$35 annual	business or municipality/	township membership
	Donation of \$	to the association genera	al fund	
	Donation of \$	to be used for the	graveyard or	municipality or
	- Denomination Call	township		

Make checks payable to: B.C.A.G.P. - 4701 St. George Street, Reading, PA 19606

NELSON FARR SERVICE AWARD

Members of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation wish to extend their condolences to family members and friends of Nelson S. Farr. Nelson was a charter member of the association and has always been a very active and loyal board member providing experience and leadership. This past fall Nelson was working with the Berks County Veteran's Director to coordinate with the present community service program of the Scouts to help monitor, and/or preserve and maintain all historic family graveyards in Berks. This coordinated program could eventually be expanded to have the youth involved in the military tribute for the funeral of veterans. The association is in the process of collecting money to establish a Nelson S. Farr service award for an individual who has worked extensively for the preservation and/or maintenance of historic area graveyards. Donations can be sent to the association office at 4701 St. George St. Reading 19606. Nelson will be missed in the activities of our association but certainly Nelson S. Farr will not be forgotten.

HERMAN/SASSAMAN SITE-MAXATAWNY







4701 St. George Street, Reading, PA 19606



