



GRAVE HAPPENINGS



Photo by Gary Koenig

The **Jean Bertolet Burial Ground** is on Blacksmith Road in Oley. Many years ago we restored the walls and caps. For decades it was cared for by a mystery person who seems to have disappeared. We did this on Oley Day of Caring with the Oley High School Students but it has not been done since. **Gary Koenig** put this on his do list this month .

**Contributors Staff/Photos
this issue**

- Ed Gensemer
- Gary Koenig
- Karla Hummel
- Les Rohrbach
- Keith Schaffer
- Paul Schuman
- Lara Thomas
- Anne Wagner
- Rod Wagner



The front right side of the Hoch in Richmond Township is soon finished. Please keep your donations coming!

GRIM WORK PARTY IN MAXATAWNY TOWNSHIP

We really had a fabulous turn out in the rain, and hope to get in to fine tune it more in the Spring. The homeowners Donna and Randy Bailey joined later, as well as a friend of theirs and his son and were planning to move the piles and piles of brush. Les Rohrbach, Keith Schaffer, Anne Wagner, Ed Gensemer, Irv Gring, Ron Smith, Lara Thomas and Gary Koenig worked through the rain drops so the day was not a total bust.



Reber

**Another wall will be done this year!
Stay tuned and keep donations
coming for the REBER.**



Keith Schaffer went at the Keim with a machete in late Summer. Gary Koenig went after and finished it up for Winter.



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Letter from Les

Kutztown University performed another Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) evaluation for us on October 11. This time the survey was done on the Barto graveyard (40' x 37') in Oley township. We selected this graveyard because it is surrounded by a low stone wall but contains just two tombstones.

Obviously, there must be more graves. Why build such a wall otherwise? We hoped to get a better understanding of the number and location of burials.

As with the 4 prior GPR evaluations, I was disappointed. As before, I read and reread the analysis that we received. However, my understanding may be increasing as I focus more attention on the technical side of the report. I am realizing that my preference for a nice concise picture of burials may not be fulfilled. The data is messy, and as such the analysis reports burials where the data fits a desired profile. As a scientific report it does not elevate less than conclusive data.

Rectangular grids are used to perform a survey, a 2' wide grid with a magnetometer and a 1' wide grid with the GPR. The equipment is moved along strings laid out to mark each grid line. Magnetic fields have positive and negative ends and will be horizontal for a burial. GPR also shows distinctive hyperbolic profiles along the edges of a burial. These are key requirements along with the size and depth expected for a burial.

A complicating factor at the Barto graveyard is suggested by the tombstones which are oblique, not perpendicular, to the walls. Apparently the software that analyzes the data is predicated on a perpendicular alignment. The grid setup parallels two walls. The hyperbolic profiles at the tombstones are elongated which is an indicator that the subsurface field (burial?) is not parallel to the walls, but is somewhat aligned with the tombstones. Other magnetic responses elsewhere the graveyard indicate fields both aligned with the walls and not aligned with the walls. Thus, the report suggests this could be a site with more than one burial orientation.



Dr Laura Sherrod shows a student how to use the equipment

The report concluded that there were indications of numerous burials. Hyperbolic reflections were 'prolific' in the southern portion of the graveyard and were correlated with magnetic anomalies. However, the likelihood of multiple burial orientations complicates the creation of a site map and none was created. While individual burials were not located, we do know the southern portion of the graveyard and the center area do contain numerous magnetic and GPR signals that support the existence of burials. This may sometimes be the limit of what I should expect from GPR surveys.

Les Rohrbach is President of BCAGP and very active in both the organizational aspects and the hands on "down and dirty in the graveyard" activities of the group. Les travels from Pottstown to his "roots" in Berks and is an avid hiker and genealogist.



The fall clean ups are pretty much over now and what is done is done.

We certainly didn't get to all, but a good amount had at least minimal maintenance. We really need the help from everyone including the property owners, the family associations and individuals to keep us abreast on what you are doing (or not doing) so we know what to prioritize for spring. Even if we only get out once a year or every other year it helps keep nature from taking over.

The membership year 2020 has begun and we hope you join and contribute, and stay involved to what ever degree you are most comfortable. The end of the year is always filled with requests for donations from every group. We are all trying to get budgets ready for the new year and financial obligations covered. We try not to hound people with year long fundraisers, as long as we can pay the bills to continue to function as a non-profit organization. We do try to keep our administration expenses as low

as possible so money coming in can be spent directly on graveyard maintenance.

We still need someone to help at the Fix/Gerber/Bitting coming Spring, as the caretaker has found it is now getting to be too much for one person alone to keep up with all growing season. This is near Queen City Diner off Lancaster Avenue. If you would like to help from time to time we can put you in touch with Neil. People have offered over time but not followed through.

If we had huge amounts of money donated we could pay for all the maintenance, rather than asking for volunteers, but we do not. This group is volunteer driven and we always need help in the form of "adopting a cemetery". If you are part of a historic organization it would be an ideal service project to select one that is in your area that is not currently being maintained! Can you ask at your next meeting?



Anne Wagner
VP BCAGP
awagner615@aol.com

SCHNEIDER

Before and after pictures taken by Gary Koenig when he and Dave Schlegel went out and did the clean up on their own.



Veteran Highlight Jacob Barto



I was able to attend the work graciously done by Dr. Sherrod's group at the Barto Cemetery in Oley. One of the three documented graves there, and still well marked by a stone and veteran's marker, is that of Private Jacob Barto.

Jacob Barto was born July 25th, 1758 and was a young man of 18 at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. He served as a private in the 5th Pennsylvania Battalion (militia) that would come to be the 6th Pennsylvania Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line of the Continental Army. Because Pennsylvania was of course not even a state yet and the Pennsylvania Assembly could rarely come to agreement on anything, much less paying this newly created military force, there was frequent reorganizing, renaming, furloughing (periods between enlistment) and poor records.

Luckily, Jacob Barto was in a rather well known unit and record exists of him as a private in 1780, serving under Captain Henry Strouch, 6th Company. We know he fought beside men with names like Jacob Kester (lieutenant), John Zimmerman (corporal), Peter Hufnagel (drummer) and Bernhard Coleman, Philip Hartman, and Andrew Kirch (all privates).

These brave men were part of the main Continental Army and participated in the Philadelphia Campaign, the Battles of Brandywine and Germantown, as well as the famous turning point of the Battle of Monmouth. These are the names we have heard and learned about since elementary school. Jacob Barto's unit fought alongside "Mad" Anthony Wayne.

After all of this, Jacob Barto came home, married (his wife Veronica is also buried at Barto Cemetery) had children and lived a long life after so much history. He passed away on February 6, 1834. From a small private cemetery we can still be drawn into the birth of this country.

Lara Thomas
Secretary, BCAGP

SET IN STONE

We frequently mention D/2 in our articles, so I'm offering this page to help you understand more details about it.

D/2 is a biocide. While Orvus, discussed in our last newsletter, cleans dirt, grime and some of the major growths from a stone, D/2 cleans biological growths like lichens, moss, algae, and mold that can be both on the surface and deeper in the pores of the tombstone. It often produces startling results.

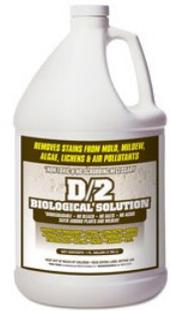
Both D/2 and Orvus have been thoroughly tested and are approved for use on historic stones by the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT), a branch of the National Park Service. D/2 has been through an extensive 7 year study showing both its effectiveness and safety.

There were biocides in use before the development of D/2, but D/2 offers a very specific difference. On the pH scale previous solutions were slightly acidic, and acid has a direct impact on the materials we've discussed in past Set in Stone columns. D/2, on the other hand, is slightly alkaline and close to the pH of the stones.

When it comes to *using* D/2, there are quite a few options. BCAGP generally prefers to simply spray on D/2 to saturate the stone (which we do not attempt when there is a chance of freezing) and walk away. We check the stone several weeks/months later and may apply a second spraying. The stone may show immediate signs of change, the most likely being that it will turn a deep shade of orange - the reaction of dying biological growth. Otherwise, the stone will whiten over time, taking up to a year to achieve its full potential whiteness (of redness in the case of red sandstone). D/2 will also protect the stone from regrowth for some time to come.

Other methods include using Orvus to soften raised growths like lichens and moss, then gently scraping these off with a soft tool like a popsicle or craft stick. This then requires significant rinsing to remove the Orvus or the application of D/2 cannot penetrate the stone. The stone can also simply be wetted down with plain water before D/2 application. Some groups prefer to dilute D/2 (understandably since it is an expensive product). Still others apply the product and then gently brush it on the stone, but we strongly prefer not to use scrubbing as a method.

If you would like to apply D/2 to family members' graves elsewhere, it is available commercially at <https://limeworks.us/product/d2-biological-solution/> based in Telford, Montgomery County.



<http://www.d2bio.com/>

Karla Hummel
2nd VP BCAGP
Berks Epitaphs@gmail.com

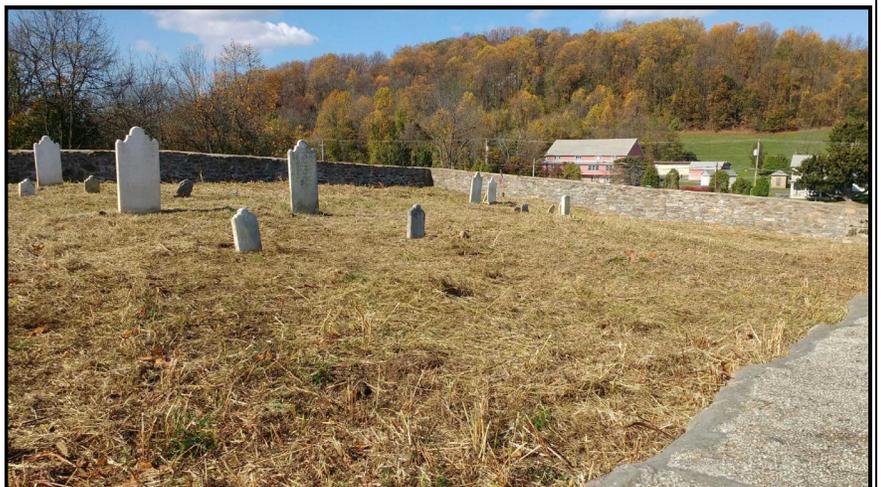
Les Rohrbach, Gary Koenig, Ron Smith, Ed Gensemer, David Schlegel, Mike Angstadt, Karla Hummel, Kelly Koup, Lara Thomas, Gail Johns, all participated in a one day round up of multiple graveyards in the Oley area November 3 2019.

The **Nein** burial ground is one that has a chronic problem with a nuisance plant called Johnson Grass. It grows to be several foot tall and is difficult to eradicate because It reproduces by rhizomes and seeds. Keith Schaffer went in with his machete and hacked it down, so the ones going in later to finish it off would be able to get inside more easily. The Johnson grass also is outside the burial ground walls. Also this is small, it is not one of the easiest to maintain due to the location and surrounding vegetation.



The **Hechler/Esterly** burial ground is larger in size than most. It is only accessible by vehicle certain times a year according to the agreement recorded in the Berks County Recorder of Deeds office. In 1934 the Esterly family entered into a right-of-way agreement with the new owner of the land Mr. and Mrs. John Labe. The agreement was for the free and uninterrupted use and passage to the parcel of ground known as the Esterly Memorial Cemetery, and a right of way leading to and around the cemetery.

It does stipulate use of motor vehicles and horses and wagons can only be during **March, April, September and October**. The long trek up a hill makes it difficult to get equipment in to work on it during the other months.





The Jacob Hill family burial ground is in East Earl Township nestled on a dairy farm. Although Hill is not an uncommon name in Berks County, we are not in contact with any descendants who believe this to be their ancestors' resting place. The 4 headstones there and visible, are for Abraham (son of Jacob) and Hannah, their son Abraham and his sister Sarah.



The **Kauffman** was included on the groups tour that day as well. The group who is working on the Kauffman family farm historical site had done a clean up last year so it was a matter of fall clean up for us. We did wall restoration work on that several years ago.



Paul Schumann has kept the **Barnet/Peter** up again nicely this season.

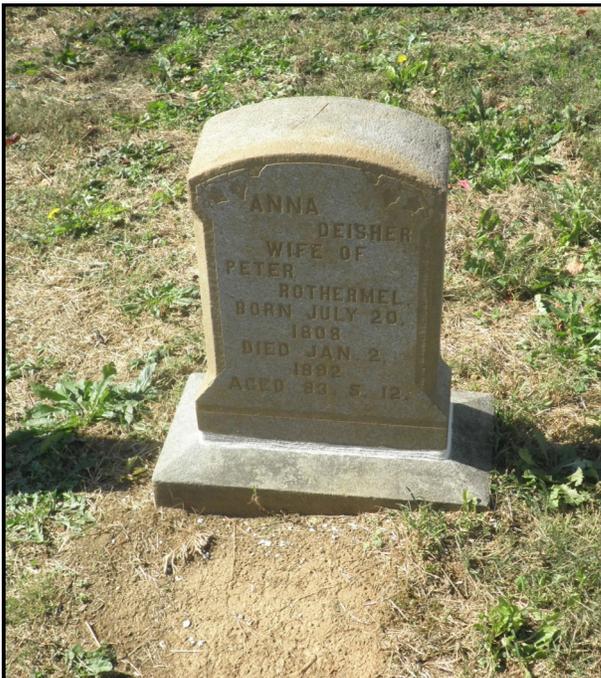


Our Mission

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.

The Annual Membership meeting will be:
February 23, 2020, 2PM at the Oley Legion Hall
on Deturk Road. (Turn at the Sunoco)

Memberships for 2020 are now due! We run a calendar year of January to December. If you do not wish to be a member, you can donate without joining, however we would love to have you! Your \$15.00 helps defray the costs of our expenses such as liability insurance, accounting and non-profit fees, and the expense of producing and mailing this newsletter!



ANNA DEISHER WIFE OF PETER ROTHERMEL
BORN JULY 20,1808 AND DIED JAN 2, 1892
AGED 83.5.12

Tombstone repair in the Rothermel family burial ground in Maiden creek Township in October 2019.

CHILDREN
Source: Find A Grave

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| Katie Rothermel Bechtel | Caroline Rothermel Teroner |
| Sarah Rothermel Bechtel | Elmira D Rothermel Kline |
| Jeremiah D Rothermel | Harriet Rothermel Snyder |
| Esther Rothermel Boyer | Franklin D Rothermel |



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 - 2020

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

\$ _____ Annual Membership, Individual \$15; Family (residing in the same household) \$25

\$ _____ Annual business or municipality membership, \$35

\$ _____ Donation earmarked for the *Association General Fund*

\$ _____ Donation to be used for the _____ gravesite

\$ _____ Donation to be used in _____ municipality



Total Amount enclosed

Date _____

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

If you prefer to NOT receive a mailed copy of the newsletter, and only view it online please check here .

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.



Please check our website www.bcagp.org
for meetings times



PO BOX 3707
READING PA 19606



WWW.BCAGP.ORG



BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION

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(email addresses on the website)



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David Schlegel * Michael Angstadt * Ed Gensemer * Ron Smith * Keith Schaffer

Newsletter contact: Anne Wagner

"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.

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