

BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION

GRAVE HAPPENINGS

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 2 JULY 2010

BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION OFFICERS:

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WWW.BCAGP.ORG

KAREN BROWN
NEWSLETTER EDITOR

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Nelson Farr Award*
- *Jackie Nein Award*
- *Day of Caring*
- *Graveyard Updates*

THE FALL NEWSLETTER WILL BE POSTED ON OUR WEBSITE! THE NEXT NEWSLETTER TO BE IN PRINT WILL BE OUR JANUARY 2011 ISSUE.

B. C. A.
PO BOX
READIN

BCAGP
Berks County Association
for Graveyard Preservation



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Daniel Schneider 1750-1817

OUR MISSION

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.

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PROPERTY OWNERS:

THE BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION VALUES THE RELATIONSHIPS WE HAVE ESTABLISHED WITH VOLUNTEERS, MUNICIPALITIES AND PROPERTY OWNERS WHO HELP US TO MAINTAIN GRAVESITES.

<u>GRAVEYARDS</u>	<u>PROPERTY OWNERS</u>	<u>TOWNSHIP</u>
LEVAN	JOHN AND PAULA JULIAN	MAXATAWNY
COLE	JOHN COLE	UNION
HIGH	WESTERN BERKS REFUSE AUTHORITY	CUMRU
CLOSE	THOMAS AND SHARON SHEARER	EXETER
GRIM	DONNA AND RANDALL BAILEY	MAXATAWNY
FEICK	JOANNE DILLMAN	UPPER TULPEHOCKEN
SEIFERT	BIL AND KATHY CLARK	UPPER BERN
SCHMEHL	THOMAS RHOADS & SHARLENE BOWERS	RICHMOND
SPOHN	TERRY AND KAREN MEITZLER	GREENWICH
ROTHERMEL	KRIS ECKENROTH	MUHLNBURG
BARTO & WEISER/DETURK	READING MOTORCYCLE CLUB	OLEY
KAUFFMAN	DAVID KOPSER	MAIDENCREEK

BCAGPBerks County Association
for Graveyard Preservation

We are continually working to keep our records current. In the event of a property owner change, please help us by contacting our organization to inform us of the change. If anyone is currently maintaining graveyards, please contact us so we can update our records. Thanks again for your support!

WE ARE IN NEED OF
VOLUNTEERS!

We are fortunate to have several dedicated volunteers that help us maintain graveyards. Even with the excellent work of our current volunteers, the number of graveyards in need of care often exceeds our capabilities to maintain on a regular basis. We are looking for volunteers to perform tasks such as mowing, weeding, and raking.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact our organization for information on the specific graveyards in need of care. BCAGP maintains records of graveyards organized by township.

Thanks again to all the volunteers who have assisted BCAGP over the years!!

NELSON FARR AWARD

Jeremy Deysher was this year's recipient of the Nelson Farr Award. Mr. Deysher is a teacher in the Oley Valley School District and has been involved with the Day of Caring for several years.

BCAGP greatly appreciates the impact he has made in encouraging student participation. Over the past years, students from Oley Valley have made significant contributions to help preserve a part of Berks County's history. Assistance from volunteers is essential in order to keep up with the care needed to maintain gravesites. Their service has been valuable in helping our organization continue our mission.

The students and teachers at Oley Valley High school are a wonderful, hardworking group of volunteers!



Board Member, Ralph Lorah (left) and President Les Rohrbach (right) presented Jeremy Deysher (center) with the Jackie Nein Award.

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Students from Oley Valley High School volunteered their time to help us clean-up fourteen historic gravesites. Over the years, students from Oley Valley have helped our organization by participating in the Day of Caring. The Day of Caring provides an opportunity for students to volunteer their time for community service projects.

Ever year the students have done an outstanding job in helping maintain gravesites!! In return, we hope their experience working with us enabled them to gain a deeper understanding of their heritage, as well as about the early families who settled in Berks County.

DAY OF CARING 2010

Students used a special treatment solution to clean the tombstones at the Schneider graveyard in Oley Township.

**DAY OF CARING 2010**

Board member, Ralph Lorah (right) with students and teachers from Oley Valley High School at the Schneider graveyard, Oley Township.

BCAGPBerks County Association
for Graveyard Preservation

Cory Ferreri, this years Jackie Nein Award recipient, takes a well-deserved break in between maintaining a gravesite.

JACKIE NEIN AWARD

Congratulations to Cory Ferreri for receiving the Jackie Nein Award in 2010. BCAGP would like to thank Cory for volunteering his time for the Day of Caring to help our organization!

History Behind the Schneider Graveyard, Oley Township

The Schneider graveyard is located 150 yards north of the Oley turnpike at Limekiln, in a field behind a farmhouse (old Snyder homestead, Susannah Cox farm). The likely origin of the graveyard was a small public burying ground at "Snyderville" (the original name for Limekiln). There are 67 inscribed gravestones at this location, including the gravestone of Johannes Schneider 1687- 1743. His gravestone is the one of the oldest stones in Berks County (and the oldest in Oley Township).

Citations

Nein, Jacqueline B., Texter, Joan., Cynthia Jimenez. Epitaphs (Reading: Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation, 1999)

Looking Back

This graveyard had an ornate gate and wall provided by the Ritter Family Association in the early 1900's. BCAGP repaired the wall in 1998 after it collapsed. Ritter descendents contributed in covering the cost of this project. This graveyard contains eight engraved stones, as well as several initialed footstones. One of the rewarding aspects about volunteering for this organization is learning the history of the families who resided in Berks during the 18th and 19th centuries.

History of the Ritter family, Exeter Township -

Francis Ritter became involved in the printing business in 1797 when he purchased stock in the Reading Adler. The descendents of the Ritter family continued in the printing business for generations. John Ritter razed the original house of his father, Isaac Ritter, in 1862 and later the land was bought by Adam Kutz.²

Citation

²Montgomery, Morton L., Historical and Biographical Annals of Berks Country (1909).



Picture from the files of Jeanette Ritter Mohnkern, of MA who died in 2005. She was born and raised on the Ritter farm on the Boyertown turnpike.

GRAVEYARD UPDATES

CLEARINGS AND CLEAN-UPS



Reichard/Dumm, Rockland Township— Before

Graveyard clean-up projects recently completed by BCAGP members:

- ✓ Reichard/Dumm, Rockland Township - This site was recently cleared and maintained by BCAGP members.
- ✓ Barnett/Peters, Maidencreek Township - This is another location that was recently cleaned and maintained.



Reichard/Dumm, Rockland Township— After

GRAVEYARD UPDATES

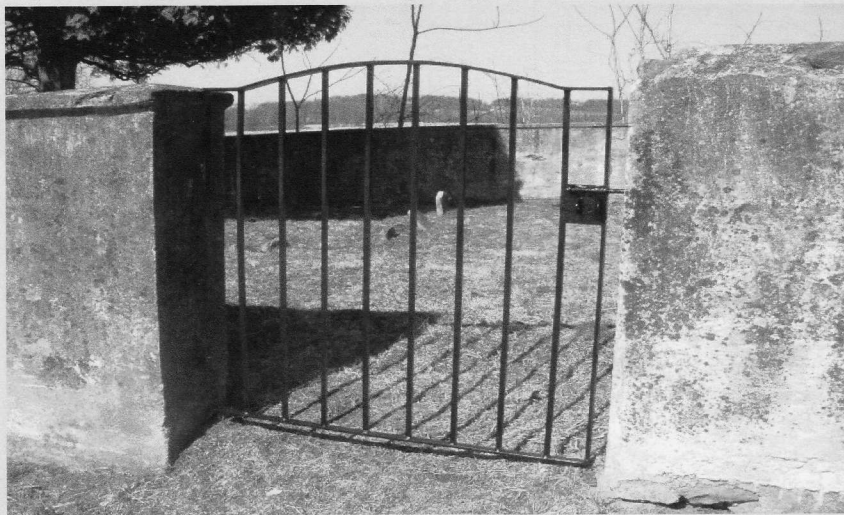
RESTORATION PROJECTS

Recently completed restoration projects:

- ✓ Kirby, Maiden Creek Township— Both the rear and side wall were repaired. Tombstones were also re-set and repaired.
- ✓ Koenig, Bern Township— A new gate has been installed.
- ✓ Schneider, Oley Township— The section of the wall that collapsed has been restored and the cap above it was replaced.
- ✓ Ruppert, Rockland Township - Wall is in the process of being rebuilt.



Ruppert Graveyard, Rockland Township



Koenig, Bern Township

GRAVEYARD UPDATES

UPCOMING PROJECTS

Upcoming projects-

- ✓ Weiser/DeTurk, Oley Township - Tombstones are soon to be repaired.
- ✓ Breteinstein, Cumru Township - Clean-up and tree removal
- ✓ Weidner, Oley Township— A section of the wall has collapsed and planning is in the works for restoration.
- ✓ Other potential projects are expected to be reviewed and approved by BCAGP board members.



Weiser /DeTurk., Oley Township



Weidner, Oley Township

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for Graveyard Preservation



JOIN OR DONATE TODAY!

If you are not yet a member, we invite you to join the efforts of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation. Annual individual membership starts at just \$15.00, not even \$1.50 per month. Family memberships are available at \$25, and corporate or municipal membership is \$35.00. There are currently over 100 members in BCAGP. Benefits of membership include *Grave Happenings* and other mailings such as meeting, picnic, or work party notices. Members are welcome to our monthly board meetings.

Memberships also make a great gift no matter the occasion or season!

ELECTION OF OFFICERS BEGINS IN AUGUST

NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICERS WILL BEGIN AT OUR AUGUST 2010 MEETING. PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR THE DATE.

OFFICERS WILL BE NOMINATED AT OUR AUGUST 2010 MEETING. THE ELECTION OF OFFICERS WILL BE LATER AT OUR NOVEMBER 2010 MEETING.

2010 MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

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: _____

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