

Grave Snappings



BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION

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BCAGP
Berks County Association
for Graveyard Preservation



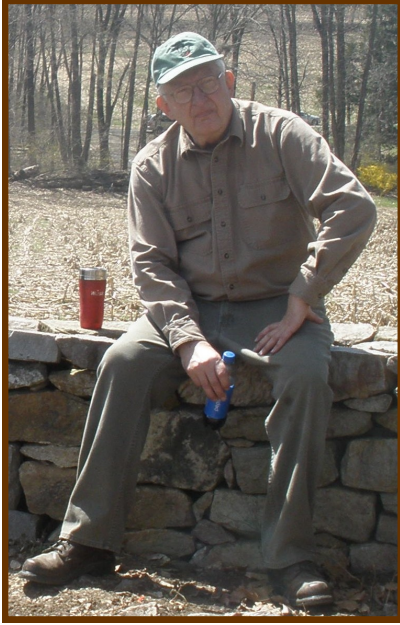
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Don't forget to check our facebook for updates and more photos!
Check the www.bcagp.org website for internet edition newsletter archives.



We have been really busy the last two months. I was thinking though, about how many new working members we have gained, which has made things so much more fun!



I always hesitate when I am naming people when I put together the newsletter because of fear that I will have forgotten someone and hurt feelings, which is the last thing I want to do. While working on finding the photos to illustrate who was at

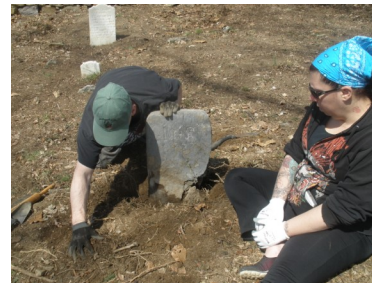
the clean up, I realized that good David Schlegel pictures are in short supply. He is there, and I can pick him out, but David is always the guy who goes to the furthest and worst part of the job and tears into it. So pictures are off in a distance of David with his powerful weed whacker! David maintains several burial grounds on his own and also places veteran flags as needed. So when I finally got a picture of David actually taking a rare break I had to share!

Georgeann is brand new and travels an hour to come work with us! And again, I will have to make sure to actually get a good picture of her face, as every picture I have of her is hard at work or off in a distance and paying me (and my camera) ab-



*olutely no attention!
Father and daughter team Ed and Sara, are turning out to also be a huge asset.*

Sara has a lot of years ahead for us to make sure she is thoroughly addicted to graveyard activities. As I noted in previous conversations, most of us are no spring chickens and we worry about the future of the burial grounds if we can't attract some younger folks. Ed also has brought in Diane to the group and we hope to be seeing her again.



Monique and Shawn have gotten bit by the bug. We hope to keep them a long time too. Monique takes amazing and

creative pictures and you will be able to enjoy them on facebook as she has allowed us to share them.

Another thing I want to stress, is that most of our volunteers are working on burial grounds which they have NO ancestors in. This is an act of kindness, not an act of responsibility! Also many are working on graveyards on their own without a group BGACP event. If you are one of those persons, please send us pictures and updates now and then ,because we want to hear from you. It is very hard to keep track of who is working where and we could use your help in tracking that.

Anne Wagner

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The work party at the **Breidenstein** Burial ground in Cumru Township went amazingly well! We had a fantastic turn out and got a lot accomplished. Georgeann, Karla, Sara, Monique, Anne, Les, Paul, Keith, Shawn, David S, Ed and David G. enjoyed the sunny day while getting something productive done! It goes so much better with a big crew.





A nice crew got together to clean up the **Ohlinger** Burial ground in Ruscombanor Township in April. Monique, Sara, Diane, Anne, Les, Bob, Ed, Keith, Shawn and David cleared the weeds and moved a lot of sticks and branches.





This is the amazing crew from the **2015 Oley Day of Caring**. They are students at Oley High school and members of the FFA. On this day the kids did about 15 clean ups under the supervision of teachers/bus drivers and BCAGP members. Lots of great pictures to share of the day on our Facebook! We cannot thank Oley School District and these kids enough for their participation. Every year we do this event it gets better and better.



Weidner

Making progress! Hopefully will be done before Summer ends!



Levan in Oley

Two years ago, we finished our restoration on the Levan burial ground in Oley by capping and re pointing the stone walls. The tombstones were in disarray and needed repair. Dr. Stephen Levan, who is a long time Oley resident and descendant of those buried there, went to work on the stones. He repaired and reset and is doing ground maintenance. This is likely the best this has looked in 50 years! Nice job Stephen!





The Klein burial ground in Jefferson township was never on our radar screen much, because of the fabulous attention it was already receiving from family members over the years. We went out to lend a hand to Wayne Klein, his wife and sister. The walls are going to need some repair work and a dead tree must be removed. We already got started with some Biocide to clean the stones. A nice day to be out in the country and meet new friends!



Across from the Keim Homestead in Rockland Township, and in the field up the hill, is one of two Keim family burial grounds. One in Pike and this one in Rockland. They are just down the road from each other, across boundary lines. Last year at day of caring, we noticed the walls were getting

pretty bad. This year even worse. At our June meeting we approved the funds to have the walls repaired and re pointed before they end up on the ground and much harder to put back together. This popped up rather suddenly due to the condition, so we will be talking with property owners and family members and getting the ball rolling. Send your donations marked John Keim in Rockland burial



Doing the Deed

Not all deeds are recorded in the Recorder of Deeds Office. Sometimes they are, sometimes they aren't. In your search, to complete a chain of deeds, a visit to the Sheriff's Office or the Court Register's Office may be in order. In Berks County the Sheriff keeps Docket books and all his activities of the office are recorded in them, including deeds he may have written. It is likely that most court houses have a similar setup.

Along with the deed that you may find in the Sheriff's Docket you will often find the reason why the sheriff was called on to sell the property. It may be to settle an estate or to settle debts, whether they are personal debts, a mortgage or taxes owed. The deed written by the sheriff should include details of the cause for the sale, when it was ordered by the court and by whom.

In the case of debts, the land owner has two options. They can assign their land in trust to another person to sell on their behalf to satisfy their creditors or they can wait until an order of execution is issued by the court and the sheriff steps in to conduct the sale. If the assignment was recorded it's simple to follow, however some assignments are only revealed in the recitation on future deeds.

In the case of an estate sale, the deceased may have left a will instructing the heirs to sell their real estate. Or he may have left it first to his heirs, who chose to sell it. In this case too, the heirs and administrators can sell it by assignment to a third party or sell it by public or private sale. The public sale is often conducted by the sheriff. For those who die intestate, or without a will, it is up to the administrators of the estate to determine how to handle any real estate the deceased may have owned.

Doing a deed search is detective work and a learning experience. First you have to know the courthouse where the deeds are recorded. Whether it be the Recorder of Deeds, the Sheriff's Office, the Register's Office or even the Court Clerk's Office, get to know your courthouse and which records are kept where.

Always begin with what you know about the land you are researching and work from there. You may want to work forward from the information you have, to a current owner and location. Sometimes your journey will take you back in time to find the history and who owned the land prior to the person you are researching. Along the way you will find many interesting and informative facts to add to your family history.

End of Deeds Glossary

Sheriff Deed - A deed issued by the Sheriff of the county, where the sale of real estate was presided over by the county sheriff. The Sheriff deed may or may not be included in the deeds in the Recorder of Deeds Office, but are always recorded in the Sheriff's Docket.

Sheriff's Docket - record of actions taken by the sheriff's office. Found in the Sheriff's Office not in the Recorder of Deeds office.

Sheriff Sale - A public sale of property, where the Sheriff presides and records the deed. The Sheriff Sale is often conducted on property owned by persons who died intestate or without a will. They can also be conducted on behalf a creditor who petitions the court to force a sale to pay a debt owed to the creditor.

Testate - To die leaving a last will and testament, identifying heirs and administrators.

Title - Same as deed or indenture.

Title Search - A methodical search made through records in the public record office to determine the state of a title, including all liens, encumbrances, easements, exceptions and mortgages affecting the property. In PA a title search establishes a history of the tract back to the first patent and warrant issued by

the Proprietors, or the Penns.

Vacant land - land that has not yet been warranted or patented to anyone and still belongs to the Commonwealth

Venditioni Exponas - The practice to expose to sell. Also referred to as Public Vendue or Public Sale. The name of the writ of execution, directed to the sheriff, commanding him to sell goods or chattels, and in some states, lands, which he has taken in execution by virtue of a fieri facias, and which remain unsold.

Vested - Fixed accrued or absolute, generally used to describe any right to title as in "vested in" or "vested interest." Often if one marriage partner dies, their interest in any real estate is vested in the surviving spouse, unless other instructions were given in the will.

Warrant - When an application is made to purchase a certain tract of land in a particular locality from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania a warrant is granted. This is an order issued to survey the tract of land. The warrant provides the basis for legal settlement but does not convey all rights to the property. In Pennsylvania The successful applicant receives a land warrant and becomes the warrantee.

Warrantee - The warrantee is the individual named on the warrant to survey a tract of

land. The warrantee may or may not be the first settler on the property. The Warrantee can transfer the warrant to another person.

When the warrantee and patentee for a tract of land are different, it typically means the land was sold by the warrantee at some point in time to another individual or individuals. The land may pass through any number of hands until someone decides to pay the fees to have the land patented. Anyone of the owners of the property, including the warrantee, could have lived on the property and improved it prior to the patentee.

Whereas - A term used to introduce a statement of fact important to the deed or title. It can denote a previous transfer of a specific tract or any other act concerning the tract, as well as how the owner came into possession of the tract.

Writ de partione facienda - the order of the court that permits the partition of a track of land, often used in estate files where the heirs petition the court to have lands divided among the heirs or into parcels that can be sold.

Betty Burdan
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Set In Stone

Karla Hummel

I thought some of you might be interested in more information about Berks County tombstones – in broad general terms as well as very specific examples – so we'll start a series of articles to address that topic.

It seems appropriate to begin with a brief discussion of rocks. Many of the earliest grave markers were made of wood and have long since deteriorated. Others were *field stones*, most often long and narrow rocks removed from plowed fields, most often with no engraving or markings. These continued to be used for servants, transients, other non-family members, or poorer citizens who had no one to pay the expense of a more formal tombstone.



A "tiger marble" tombstone in the Schneider graveyard in Limekiln:

While we are most familiar with the granite markers that fill more recent cemeteries, granite didn't become popular for this use until about 1860. Granite has numerous advantages over its predecessors: hardness, polish, resistance to environmental extremes, various colors, and capacity to hold intricate carving. The stones in the Berks historic graveyards, including those of limestone, sandstone & marble, fare less well as the elements take their toll.

Visiting historic Berks graveyards, you may notice a number of *marble* tombstones. It wasn't until the 19th century that transportation was sufficiently established to bring marble south from Vermont, and it remained expensive. Yet Berks has many marble stones. Where did the marble come from? Both written records and underwater archeological evidence confirm the perhaps surprising answer: marble arrived from Italy (often via Holland) as *ballast* in trans-Atlantic ships. Finished or rough marble declared as ballast was not subject to the same tariffs and

taxes that cargo would have been, making it more affordable – and often augmenting the profits of ships' captains. Much of the stone used locally is "tiger marble" (also called tiger skin or tiger stripe marble), with dark streaks caused by mineral impurities throughout

This use of stone as ballast reached a critical point in the 1890's, when granite came from abroad as ballast and challenged the stone quarried in the United States. The Congressional Record, vol. 21, part 5, includes a lengthy argument about importing European stone as ballast, making it competitive in price to domestic stone. One member of the House of Representatives said that taxing such imported stone was "a tax on the dead." He received this response:

"Now, will not some gentleman tell me why we should bring rocks and stones 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean? Pray, have we not ledges and rocks enough in this country from which to quarry every conceivable kind of material for building or monumental purposes? There can be but one answer, and that answer is that these stones can be wrought by the poorly paid, underpaid, and pauper labor of Europe cheaper than they can in this country, and cross the Atlantic and be laid down in our markets for less than they can be quarried and wrought here."



Every now and then there is a mystery tombstone that we hope to find the rightful location for. A tombstone many years ago, was found near the remains of a burned barn on the former Bingaman property, which became the City Nature Center. There was speculation that there was a burial ground there, but there was never any historical documentation to prove that. The pieces had been taken to the Berks Heritage Center and were placed on a desk in hopes to gain information from it. We went to see it, after a talk we did there in June, and moved a few pieces around to complete the puzzle. There are pieces missing but there are enough to clearly see whose stone this is.



We can clearly see the name Daniel Jung. Above it in German is "wife of". We can also see that she was born (geboren) Schneider. After her last name, and after her maiden name are the letters "in". That is how they feminized the surname. So Schneiderin means it is a

female with a last name of Schneider. Jungin is a female with the last name of Jung. We can see the number 6 on the right of one piece, and the number 7 below that. Also we can see 3 months. The biblical verse is complete and no pieces missing. Karla reading German was a big help there.



Research shows there was an Elizabeth Schneider who married a Daniel Jung in 1822. One of the staff at the Heritage Center was able to find that online while we were still there. Les Rohrbach found more once home and at his computer. Elizabeth was born May 6 1803 and Died Aug. 7 1826. There is our number 6 and number 7. She died 3 months after her birth month which explains the 3 months in the section that normally would have how many years, months and days they were alive.

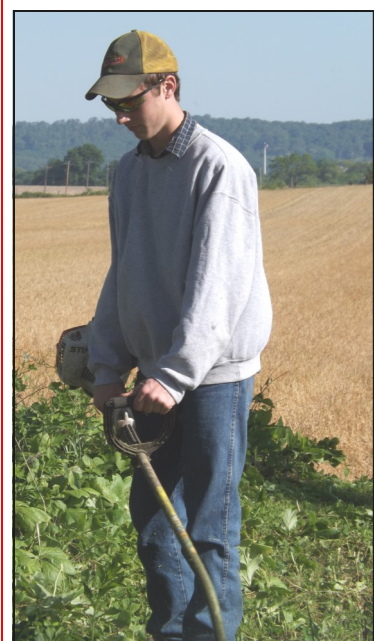
We have found no historical reference that she or her husband was ever connected to the Bingaman Property. Les found records to show her husband remarried. Her parents are buried in the Schneider burial ground in Limekiln. So far we have not found where she was to be buried.

Often we find tombstones in odd places and we try to figure out how they got there. Sometimes they were actually misprint stones that were put out for scrap by the stone carver. Sometimes after breaking, they were replaced and someone removed the pieces. There were church cemeteries that discarded tombstones that were broken and people were known to haul them away. And sometimes, but not often, they are actually from a burial ground on the property.

If you know where Elizabeth Schneider Jung is buried, please drop me an email or call.. awagner615@aol.com or 610-926-5036

Anne Wagner

Congratulations to Zachary Wagner our 2015 Jacqueline Nein Award recipient! Zachary is a 2015 Oley High School Graduate now!



Historic Burial Places Preservation Act (PDF) of April 29, 1994 (P.L. 141, No. 22)

This Act defines "Historic burial place" as "A tract of land that has been in existence as a burial ground for more than 100 years wherein there have been not burials for at least 50 years and wherein there will be no future burials or listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission."

It further states that municipalities may not use eminent domain to take a historic burial ground for an alternate use. PHMC approval must be given before a burial ground is taken for "public use." If the burial ground is taken for public use, then the burial ground authority must preserve a record of what was removed. This record must be sent to the county and PHMC.

Furthermore, this Act also stipulates that the following actions are illegal: the removals of a fence, tomb, monument, gravestone, or fragment. These actions are legal only if the object(s) is being removed with consent of the owner or descendent **and** a court order for the purpose of "repair or replacement, reproduction or preservation and display in an accredited museum."

Next board meeting: August 9th at the Oley Legion Hall at 2PM. As always ,members are always invited and welcome to participate. At this time we have no scheduled work parties for the summer. Various members will still be looking after their adopted graveyards . Anyone who wants help is welcome to have it posted on facebook! Watch facebook for any impromptu work parties to be announced.

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.

"Grave Happenings" is a collection of articles provided by members of our Board about recent and on-going activities. We are always open to your suggestions for future content.

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

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 - 2015

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

Membership runs a calendar year January to December. Membership dues paid after October 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*