

GRAVE HAPPENINGS

WEB SITE ADRESS

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Karen Brown

Newsletter Editor

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**Berks County Association for
Graveyard Preservation Officers:**

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BCAGP
Berks County Association
for Graveyard Preservation



RESTORATION OF THE HISTORIC LEVAN GRAVEYARD , MAXATAWNY TOWNSHIP

The Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation recently completed restoration of the historic Levan graveyard located along Eagle Point road in Maxatawny Township. This was a relatively large project for BCAGP.

When BCAGP initially assessed the location, the wall was badly deteriorated and most of the graveyard's 30 tombstones were concealed under earth. The first phase of the restoration process was recovering and resetting the tombstones. The ground also needed to be leveled and reseeded.

The next phase was the rebuilding of the wall that surrounds the graveyard. The stone mason who built the new wall constructed a greenhouse at the site to enable him to continue working through the winter months. Upon the wall's completion, the gate was replaced.

As part of the last phase, The Pennsylvania Granite Company donated a granite stone to be placed at the site. Todd Evans, of Evans Memorials, engraved the stone for BCAGP at a reduced cost. The engraved granite stone, detailing the history of Jacob Levan and Sebastian Levan, was placed at the grave site. The only remaining task for BCAGP is to cap the stone wall.

On July 25th 2009, one year after the project began, a dedication ceremony was held on-site. BCAGP was encouraged by the wide-spread interest in this project. Approximately 50 Levan descendants were among the 80 people in attendance. Some descendants had traveled from California, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, New York, New Jersey and Ohio. The Huguenot Society of Pennsylvania and SAR-The Governor Joseph Hiester Chapter also participated in the Dedication ceremony.

BCAGP is grateful for the support received from Marcia Simmons, other Levan descendants, and the Julians in helping to fund this project. Marcia Simmons received the Nelson Farr award for her dedication to this project. Ellis Adams, 1st Vice President of the Huguenot Society of PA and a Levan descendant, was instrumental in organizing the dedication event. Our organization would also like to thank the property owners for their interest in this project, and for enabling BCAGP to have a ceremony at this location.

LEVAN FAMILY HISTORY

The family buried at this site played an interesting role in our country's early history. Jacob Levan (1702-1763), a French Huguenot who arrived in the colonies in 1715, helped organize a militia to protect colonists during the French and Indian War. Jacob later served as a Berks County judge 1752-1762.

His son, Sebastian Levan (1727-1790), served in the American Revolution as a colonel for the militia's 7th Battalion. In addition to his military service, Sebastian also was a member of the State Assembly From 1779-1780, and councilor for the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council 1782-1784. Sebastian is noted for attending the Provincial and Lancaster conventions. Although a marker had been placed on Jacob's grave honoring his military service, there was difficulty in obtaining a marker for Sebastian due to confusion over his burial site.



DAY OF CARING 2009

On May 22nd, several Oley Valley High School students volunteered their time to help Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation. The students spent the day caring for 16 historic graveyards in Berks County. Oley Valley students worked hard to clean-up grave sites by mowing, trimming weeds and raking.

The students were not only hard-working, but also shared a great deal of interest in our region's history. Students expressed appreciation for our ancestors and the importance of preserving their final resting places.

BCAGP is grateful for the help we receive from Oley Valley students each year! The students are dedicated to preserving Berks County history and contribute outstanding work!

Congratulations to Colin Hauseman who was this year's recipient of the Jackie Nein Award. Colin received this award for his outstanding participation in the Day of Caring



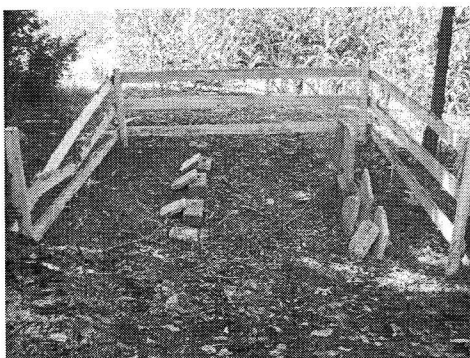
COMPLETED PROJECTS AND CLEAN-UPS

The following is a list of some of the recent restoration projects that are now complete:

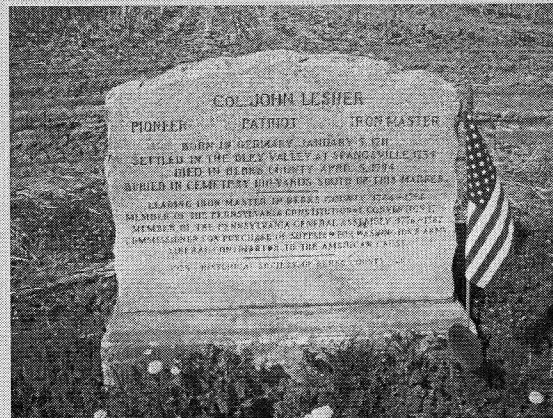
- ✓ **High/ Hoch , Cumru Township** - Caps have been installed on the wall. The caps will enable the wall to be protected and preserved for a longer period of time.
- ✓ **Pott, Pike Township** - A dedication ceremony was held on August 22nd.
- ✓ **Leshner, Oley Township** - The metal railings that surround the grave site were replaced and painted.
- ✓ **Levan, Maxatawny Township** - This was a relatively large project for BCAGP.



RICKENBACH GRAVEYARD, BEFORE



RICKENBACH GRAVEYARD, AFTER



MARKER HONORING COL. JOHN LESHER, OLEY TOWNSHIP

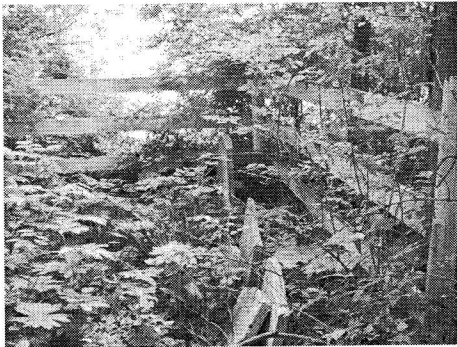
Clean-up projects completed -

- ✓ **Barnet Peters, Maiden-creek Township**
- ✓ **Bittenbender, Hereford Township**
- ✓ **Schneider, Oley Township**
- ✓ **Kutz, Maxatawny Township** - A tombstone was also re-set.
- ✓ **DeTurk, Oley Township**
- ✓ **Rickenbach, Bern Township** - Zach Beatty, a scout who is working on his Eagle project, volunteered to clean-up this graveyard as part of the curriculum for becoming an Eagle Scout.
- ✓ **Nine, Oley Township**
- ✓ **Hunter/Kemp, Oley Township**
- ✓ **Herbein, Oley Township**
- ✓ **Gulden, Oley Township**

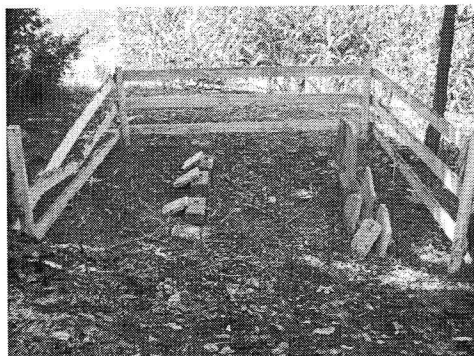
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