

# Epitaphs



Publication of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation-Vol. 3 February 1997

## EDUCATION IS KEY

Education is one of the major goals of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation. Until now, we were concerned about education relative to preserving the existing historic graveyards. A set of unusual circumstances brought to our immediate attention that an educational effort is vital, not just to attempt to recover lost sites, but to educate the public about laws relative to removing remains from graveyards and destroying or moving evidence that denotes a graveyard. **This is illegal.** It would appear that many well-educated people and officials do not realize that when an area is "dedicated" in a will or a deed then that land can never be sold and used for other purposes without a court order. **This is the law!**

What caused over half of our known historic graveyards (150 out of 300) in Berks to disappear? In colonial times and even up to about 1855 many individuals were buried on the homestead land. Most public cemeteries did not exist and sometimes church cemeteries were too far away. Genealogists know all too well how, in some areas, in particular, burial places for early generations are very difficult if not impossible to find. Perhaps we can now discover some of these sites. Education is key, along with research. We can try our best to salvage the situation. The intent of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is to try to glean as much information about the burial site as possible, to organize existing involved parties to attempt to rectify the situation, to educate the public so these situations do not continue to occur, to recognize the significance and contribution of these early settlers of Berks County, and to perpetuate an appreciation for our culture, history and heritage.

## THANK YOU

Sandy Ruppert and Louise Feger are retiring as officers and Cynthia Jimenez from the board. Their efforts are certainly appreciated and recognized.

## BOARD LEADERSHIP

The new board will organize after the March meeting. Returning board members include: Kerry Dietrich, Nelson Farr, Barbara Nissley, Charles Nissley, Martin Peicker, Carl Zettlemoyer, Jeremy Deysher and Jacqueline B. Nein. Tim Rowley is the Solicitor.

For the year of 1997 we would like to function by projects, rather than by titles. Currently we are involved in business that does not conform well to *expertise* assignment duties. We should like to increase board positions to help with the huge volume of exciting new projects. Anyone interested in serving on the board this year and/or becoming an officer in 1998 should contact the E.D. at 779-3464.

## COMMUNITY SERVICE

Volunteerism and community service is the trend of the future, and **Kutztown Area High School Key Club** is setting the pace for other school districts to serve their area. These students have adopted the seven neglected historic graveyards in Maxatawny and will be monitoring the condition of others. Key club members voted to undertake this project, not as a school district requirement, but as a pledge to the community to forever preserve and maintain these sites symbolic of our unique culture, history and heritage. Long after these students graduate the club members will continue with the on going pledge of the Key Club members of the year 1997. You **Maxatawnians** are setting the pace for Berks County. Congratulations to you and your sponsor for taking this initiative.

Owners will be contacted and members will tour the sites and evaluate the needs. They will begin work this spring and are looking forward to the United Way's Day of Caring to be held May 14th.

General meetings are scheduled the second Tuesday in March, May, September and November at 7 P.M. at the Lorane Elementary School Cafeteria in Exeter Township. The public is always invited and most welcome.

## CHARLES ADAMS III - TUESDAY, MARCH 11 GRAVEYARD TALES



The annual meeting of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation will be held Tuesday, March 11, 1997 at 7 P.M. at the Lorane Elementary School cafeteria on Rittenhouse Drive in Exeter Township.

The guest speaker will be Charlie Adams, WEEU's morning personality and promotions director. In addition to his chores at WEEU, Charlie is also chief travel correspondent for the Reading Eagle-Times and the writer of a biweekly column, "Berks the Bizarre". Charlie is a native of Reading and Berks and is extremely active in promoting nonprofit organizations and educational programs. The topic for the evening will be "Graveyard Tales." You will certainly enjoy Charlie's appropriate presentation. The public is invited to attend and share the evening with us.

**BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION  
BUDGETED AND ACTUAL STATEMENTS OF CASH RECEIPTS AND CASH DISBURSEMENTS  
YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1997 AND 1996**

	BUDGET 1997	ACTUAL 1996	BUDGET 1996
BEGINNING CASH BALANCE - JANUARY 1	\$19,961.77	\$13,252.50	\$13,252.50
<b>CASH RECEIPTS:</b>			
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND DUES	11,500.00	11,185.04	10,000.00
CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS AND DUES	6,000.00	5,113.80	5,000.00
FUNDRAISING/OTHER	6,500.00	4,754.78	0.00
INTEREST INCOME	450.00	315.34	150.00
<b>TOTAL CASH RECEIPTS</b>	<b>24,450.00</b>	<b>21,348.96</b>	<b>15,150.00</b>
<b>CASH DISBURSEMENTS:</b>			
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE:</b>			
COPIES	125.00	94.44	130.00
FINANCIAL	175.00	145.40	25.00
MILEAGE	125.00	0.00	175.00
PHOTOGRAPHY	100.00	0.00	125.00
POSTAGE	175.00	153.95	150.00
STATIONERY	50.00	0.00	50.00
SUPPLIES	200.00	161.74	200.00
TELEPHONE	300.00	184.35	150.00
MISCELLANEOUS	350.00	256.35	300.00
<b>SUB-TOTAL ADMINISTRATION</b>	<b>1,800.00</b>	<b>996.23</b>	<b>1,305.00</b>
HISTORIAN	50.00	0.00	50.00
FINANCE/FUND RAISING	1,300.00	815.93	100.00
LEGAL/MUNICIPAL	50.00	0.00	50.00
<b>MAINTENANCE:</b>			
POSTAGE	10.00	0.00	10.00
COPIES	10.00	0.00	10.00
SUPPLIES	25.00	0.00	25.00
<b>SUB-TOTAL MAINTENANCE</b>	<b>45.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>45.00</b>
MEMBERSHIP	50.00	0.00	50.00
SOCIAL	50.00	9.56	50.00
PRESERVATION	17,000.00	12,115.64	16,000.00
<b>PUBLICATIONS:</b>			
BROCHURES	100.00	42.40	250.00
ANNUAL REPORT	650.00	455.80	200.00
POSTAGE	250.00	181.23	150.00
<b>SUB-TOTAL PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>1,000.00</b>	<b>679.43</b>	<b>600.00</b>
PUBLIC RELATIONS	100.00	22.90	350.00
RESEARCH	100.00	0.00	100.00
<b>TOTAL CASH DISBURSEMENTS</b>	<b>21,345.00</b>	<b>14,839.69</b>	<b>18,700.00</b>
CASH BALANCE - DECEMBER 31	\$23,066.77	\$18,961.77	\$9,702.50

**THANK YOU**

Our financial report for 1996 is most impressive. Comparing this report to our progress report illustrates very good use for your money. We were low in spending preservation funds because we selected sites that had outside financial support or funds with us earmarked specifically for a particular graveyard. Community grant funds are not expected to be available for another year or two and we will have to pay before reimbursement. Please review this newsletter carefully and evaluate our impact. We are thankful to many of you for your financial support, your donations in services and raw materials and your help, interest and concern. Please continue to provide this support. We are a non profit 501 (3c) organization. It takes a lot of time, effort and money to accomplish all our goals of preserving our heritage for the future generations of Berks County. **Please help us to make 1997 even better than 1996.**

**ENDOWMENT OPTION**

You can endow an historic graveyard with our association by investing the principle and designating our group as the custodian. We would use the interest to maintain the graveyard 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.

**OFFICER NOMINEES FOR 1997**

**Executive Director: Jacqueline B. Nein**, incumbent, a graduate of West Chester State and Temple University, was employed by the Pottsgrove School District as a teacher, a department chairperson and a coach and is now retired. She was the first woman to receive the "Best Coach of the Year Award" from the Greater Pottstown Area Oldtimers. In 1995 she was honored by the Mahanatawny Chapter of the D.A.R. for her achievement in organizing community efforts to preserve historic graveyards. Jackie helped organize the Berks County Genealogical Society and compiled and published the church records of First Reformed and Trinity Lutheran, Reading, among others. The "9" and Dunkelberger family associations were organized and the "9" historic family graveyard was repaired. She is historian for both groups and has compiled and published both family genealogies. She is the Judge of Elections for Exeter Township, Precinct 3, Berks County, PA and a member of St. Andrew's U.C.C., Reading, PA.

**Assistant Executive Director: Rodney R. Kline**, is a graduate of Oley Valley Area High School and a graduate of the National Graduate Trust School, Northwestern University. He is Vice President of Corporate Services, Investors Trust Company which is a wholly owned subsidiary of National Penn Bancshares. Rodney was in the US Air Force: Nuclear Weapons Loading Crew Chief, 1958-1963. He and his wife, Pat, have two children: Cheryl L., wife of Donald Keim and David R. and two grandchildren. They are members of Friedens Evangelical Lutheran in Oley and Rodney is a past president of the Boyertown Area Kiwanis Club. His hobbies include fishing and computers. Rodney is concerned about the Kline/Close historic family graveyard and will be working for the preservation of the wall and gate.

**Treasurer: Kerry L. Dietrich**, incumbent treasurer, is a native of Kutztown and holds a B.S. in Business Administration from Kutztown University and an M.B.A. from Lehigh University. In addition, Kerry also completed graduate courses at Tubingen University in southern Germany. Also a CPA, CMA and Notary Public, Kerry has completed four years in public accounting, served eight years as Finance Director and Secretary/Treasurer for a local manufacturer and worked in Heidelberg, Germany in the financial consolidation department for a large international construction materials producer. He is currently Administrator-Treasurer for Lehigh Portland Cement Company in Allentown.

**Secretary: Darlene Botts Raysor**, graduate of Boyertown High School, has over 25 years of secretarial experience and is secretary to C. W. Kline of the Kline Granite Company, Boyertown. Darlene is actively involved with church work.



## PROGRESS REPORT



SNYDER

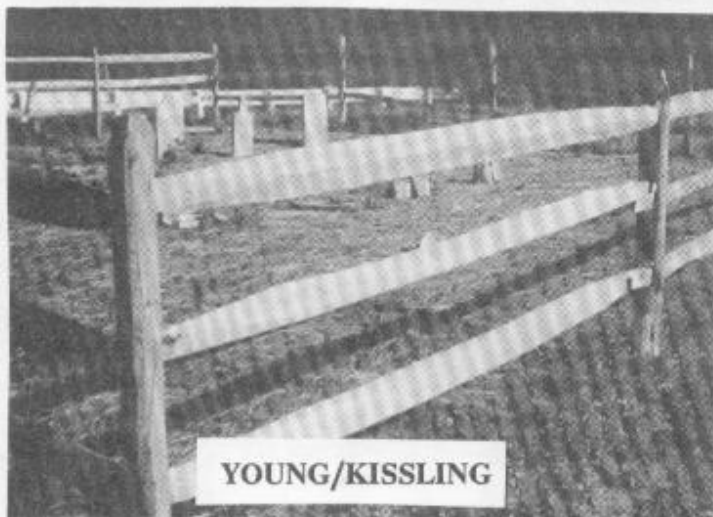


HUNTER/KEMP

**Adoption:** Of the 76 neglected historic graveyards in Berks County 67 (88%) have been adopted since our incorporation, and these graveyards are now being maintained. Of these, 30 still need major masonry or enclosure repairs.

**1996 Projects (Sites were selected for major masonry repairs because money was or is available for that particular site)**

- A Community Service Crew under the direction of Joseph J. Reilly is regularly scheduled early in the spring and late in the fall to clean county graveyards. This program is invaluable to our success.
- The Keim #1 was cleared by a descendant and the walls rebuilt and pointed.
- The Young/Kissling was cleared and plotted by Eagle Scout candidate Loren Cammack. The area was dowsed and found to have room for 18 graves; two graves were vacant. Some tombstones were mended and reset and the area fenced in with split rails and a gate. This was a cooperative effort of Loren and his troop, the owner and the Exeter Township Road Crew. The road crew removed two huge dead trees and erected a crash barrier to protect the graveyard.
- Descendants cleaned up the Spohn in Greenwich Township. The wall was rebuilt this spring at a cost in excess of \$6000. Five thousand of this was from initiative money. Descendants had a campaign to finance the rest of the needed work. The graveyard has been dowsed. Descendants are learning how to point and will be resetting the remaining tombstones and field stones at the unmarked graves.
- The Williams will have a new entry road. A tombstone has been ordered for the Civil War veteran who is said to be buried there with his horse. As a result of dowsing activity, it seems apparent that there is a single burial in each of the four corners of the graveyard. The dowsing rods became extremely active in the very center. The dowsing rods were taken outside the graveyard. An underground spring runs through the site. This is not to say the horse isn't buried there. The custom was to bury families together in rows. Why would four people be buried so far apart?
- The Fix/Gerber graveyard was groomed by a student crew from the Youth Outreach Program. A Boy Scout Troop maintains it. Minor wall repairs were made.
- The United Way sponsored a "Day of Caring" this past spring, and five crews were assigned historic graveyards. Kutztown High students worked on the Herman/Sassaman and the Kemp in Maxatawny Township. Work was done at the Hoch/Bertolet and the Keim. The Breidenstein was cleared: resetting and repair of broken stones and the wall were accomplished by the carpentry class of Reading/Muhlenberg Vo-Tech. The boys also had a lesson in dowsing.
- The remaining Barnett/Peters stones were reset. The area was dowsed. The summer crew marked the graves with fieldstones. Sedum was planted last spring as an experimental ground cover.
- The Barto in Oley was cleared of weeds and the grass cut by the summer crew.
- The Snyder in Oley (the largest and the oldest in the county) containing 6 veterans of the Revolution and 3 of the War of 1812 was cleaned up and dowsed, and the tombstones piled in the corner were reset. Many of the standing stones had to be reset because the cattle managed to invade the property. The walls need major repairs. Bids were obtained this fall. The masonry wall phase will begin when funds become available.
- The summer crew worked with the stone mason to point the inside of the Levan in Oley. A new gate was tailored for the entrance by Wentzel Fabrications Inc., Oley.
- All masonry work has now been completed at the Hunter/Kemp in Oley by stone mason Nat Fetter. The FFA of Oley Area High School, under the direction of Jeremy Deysher, groomed the area.
- The Kieffer graveyard in Maxatawny had a split rail (financed by a descendant from Georgia) installed by Association volunteers. The summer crew weeded the area. The entrance will be refined, and the fence securely nailed.
- The Schaeffer graveyard in Richmond was cleaned, dowsed and field stones set at unmarked graves. The one wall was rebuilt by stone mason Mike Zuber and the summer crew. Under the direction of Bruce McLean the Exeter High School Key Club removed stucco from the third wall. Money was collected by Schaeffer descendants, and four walls are completed and pointed, except for an area four feet wide which still needs to be pointed. The metal gate was repaired and refinished and



YOUNG/KISSLING



KIEFFER

will be installed this spring. More money is needed to finance a regular maintenance program.

- One of the last graveyards to receive special attention was the Herman/Sassaman in Maxatawny.
- Other graveyards on farmed land were groomed by the Community Service Crew in November.
- Progress continued all over the county on the many adopted historic graveyards.
- Our first major fund raiser, preparing and selling recycled cemetery logs for Christmas, was very successful, netting over \$3000. Plans are already under way for expansion in 1997.

#### 1997 Projects Under Way

- A tombstone from the Kleinginna site is safe on Cumru Township property. Efforts are being made to confirm the location of this historic family graveyard. The inscription on the stone is *H. R. 1811*.
- The Weitman graveyard in Cumru Township has been located by our Association and is in the process of evaluation and hopefully adoption. This site is dedicated.
- No original stones remain for the Hemmig graveyard in Cumru. Remains of the wall are still visible. A memorial tombstone was placed there by descendants.
- Two Messerschmidt tombstones were obtained by the Association. Before they can be returned and relocated at the original site, both will need a longer base stick affixed.
- Trees were planted by the owner at the Young/Kissling between the site and the road barrier.
- Negotiations are under way to begin masonry repairs at the High/Hoch graveyard in Cumru. A committee of descendants is needed to help arrange financing and supervision. The landfill authority has been contacted to collaborate with masonry repairs and financing.
- The newly discovered Kilmer site in Marion Township was cleaned by eight boys and girls and three staff members from the Weekend Intensive Service Group at Bethany. The owner was pleased and will now maintain the site.
- Working with the new owner R A M, plans have been made to clean up the dedicated Rickenbach site in Ontelaunee Township. This site was desecrated by land development and owners. Philip Rickenbach will advise, surveyor Todd Babcock will mark off the site and the area will be searched for buried tombstones. This site and the Rickenbach across the Schuylkill have top area priority. Descendants are being contacted for financing.
- Tremendous progress has been made proving that the Reichert/Dum graveyard in Richmond Township is Catholic. It is located in the Goshoppen Region and was also called Miners Church. Many records involving people buried here have been located by Bernice Sell in the Bally records. The church was located on the property of what is now Allentown Cement at Evansville. The church was torn down after activities at the mine ceased and the stones used to build a wall around their Reichert/Dum graveyard. A map is available that shows the church site. Attorney Michael C. Boland is working with the Catholic Church to finance the rebuilding of the wall. If money is made available in time, work will begin by Meno Burkholder after the Williams is completed. The Community Service crew can begin to prepare the area and a crew assigned for the United Way Volunteer Day. The employment and training crew can also be assigned.
- Michael C. Boland has requested a grant from the Rex Foundation to support our activities.
- Work is under way discovering burials at the recently rediscovered dedicated "Jones" graveyard in Cumru. Funds are needed to finance education, research and identification of missing graveyards and probable burials. Two burials recently identified are for Hannah, wife of John Hill and for Johannes Gaul.

A permanent display is continually updated on the second floor connecting corridor of the Court House and Services Center. Pamphlets are available there. An area display can be seen at the Exeter Township Building.

**Contributions and new members are needed to continue with the masonry phase of other projects and to expand our preservation efforts. Please share in our pride in preserving and protecting this remaining evidence of Berks County's early inhabitants, history and heritage.**



## NO STONE UNTURNED

a series of related articles written and abstracted by Jacqueline B. Nein

### Executive Director of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation and a Huyett descendant

A piece of a tombstone was discovered in a maintenance barn by a Reading attorney, Michael C. Boland. Mr. Boland began a vigorous effort to complete the inscription to determine whose stone this was. The author was contacted to help identify the individual and to help determine where the stone was originally located. The stone has a date of 1871 but it should read 1872 (Reading Adler, October 15, 1872 - cause of death was cramps). This mistake was probably made by the monument carver because it was prepared at the same time as his parents' markers who both died in 1871 and are buried on the same lot.

What began as a relatively simple task became increasingly complicated as more information was obtained. The stone was identified as that of Isaac G. Huyett, June 8, 1833-September 11, 1872. The Berks County Atlas of 1862 and of 1876 provided many clues. On the 1862 map, Isaac's property was marked near but across the road from his father Isaac's, in the vicinity of the Five Mile Hill. On the 1876 map of Cumru, a "cemetery" was identified on the property where the stone was found. This cemetery was not shown on the 1862 Atlas nor is it included in the "Genealogical Guide to Berks County Private Cemeteries" by Laurel Miller. Isaac was not in the direct Huyett line where the stone was found. Recorded in the deaths of St. John's is not an absolute confirmation that the burial took place on the Sinking Spring Cemetery. Interment could be at a private location. Evidence seemed to indicate that burials at Sinking Spring Cemetery were likely. Isaac's wife, Hannah, the daughter of Christian and Hannah (Spohn) Lauer (July 29, 1837-August 22, 1887). Clarence Noecker, manager of the cemetery, reported exactly where the graves of Hannah and Isaac were located and that their stones were intact. A visit was immediately made to the site by Michael C. Boland and the author. The old piece of stone of Isaac was very thick, ornate and expensive (cost was \$110) and matched the stones of his parents who died the previous year and were buried in the same row as Isaac. After Hannah's death smaller stones for Isaac's family were ordered to match.

Presentday procedure is to allow the family to have the old stone or to break up the stone and use the pieces in foundations on the cemetery. At times it was up to the monument firm to get rid of the old stone when replacing it with a new one. Somehow a piece of Isaac's old stone showed up on the quarry property. Fragments of old stones can reappear and cause great concern. A good practice would be to bury these fragments in a foundation on site.

**The fragment of Isaac Huyett's stone was buried inscription down next to the replacement on the Sinking Spring Cemetery lot.**

**So now problems identified by, but unrelated to the investigation of Isaac's stone, can and should be addressed.**

### Hugh Jones - First in Cumru

A date stone of 1727 was not for the present stone Huyett house, the date was for the one and one-half story log cabin that the Jones family lived in. Hugh Jones, a Welshman, was the first Cumru settler and was here on the Wyomissing banks long before the patent was granted to him by the Penns after Hugh's death. In fact, in Hugh's will of 1734 mention is made of the graveyard across the Wyomissing from his house and stipulations about the graveyard and the burial of his wife Jane (Pugh) Jones. This is the first documentation to dedicate the site. Jane was not buried here but left the area about 1735, and the graveyard property went to the son David and his wife, Lucy. *In 1745 David granted unto John Pugh 35 1/2 acres of ground surrounding the graveyard. Even though there was no mention in the deed, an indentation on one side and measured around shows a spot 19 perches on northwest side, 32 perches on east, 4 perches on southeast and 26 perches on southwest side reserved and not sold. This spot has never been sold and yet remains in the property of David Jones, the son of Hugh. The warrant to Hugh for 1,000 acres bears the date March 10, 1732-33. Son John Jones gets land along the Wyomissing and a branch of the Cacoosing. The plantation where they now live goes to wife, Jane and then son David. His son Evan inherits land lying on Angelica Run. In a codicil annexed to David's will he does, give and devise one quarter of an acre for the use of this church forever to be surveyed off so as to include the Church and the Burial Grounds.*

A December 31, 1996 article by Eileen Cornish in the Reading Times reported the possible sale of the historic Huyett property by the Boro of Wyomissing. On two separate field trips specific areas of the Huyett and Hill properties were dowsed to locate a pattern of burials. Joan Texter, Scott Huyett (a descendant and Reading attorney) and I covered an area located directly in front of the Wyomissing Huyett home presently in the flood plain. Unlikely that this site would be selected as a burial ground; nevertheless, an extensive pattern was found. On the second attempt by Joan and her committee and Thomas Leininger the pattern up the bank proved even more extensive. Needless to say this dowsing information was very disturbing to our investigation. We thought, "battles, epidemics, indian burials - what else?" The Wyomissing Boro manager arrived on site and indicated that we should check the area immediately across the Wyomissing Creek, the site indicated on the 1876 Atlas. (This land used to be Hill property but title information shows that John Huyett in his will of 1887 assigned this 12 acre parcel to his son Daniel.) That afternoon a small section of the area between the Hildebrand home and the quarry was dowsed and a few graves might be indicated. The Boro office was contacted and information on the chain of title was offered for the Hildebrand and the Huyett property. All owners were systematically checked in "Montgomery's History." Even though the Jones family introduced the Baptist faith here in Berks County in 1738, Hugh Jones and his family, the first settlers in Cumru were never Baptist. The Welsh settled along the banks and branches of the Tulpehocken, Wyomissing and Cacoosing Creeks, operating the early mills. Since the early owners of the Huyett and Hildebrand property were Welsh, the pattern of burials could be related to this settlement.

### Early History of Cumru

Abstracted from an article appearing in the Governor Mifflin Area History, August, 1984, by Fae Z. Kaufman  
Cumru history prior to the Revolutionary War is somewhat obscure and "sketchy" at best. Around 1727, this was the frontier -

unsettled, undeveloped and, for the most part unexplored. There existed a small but active group who lived their lives and then vanished from the scene, leaving little in their wake but their burial ground. Hugh's plantation was about halfway between the two Baptist congregations. Each of these Meeting Houses had its own burial ground. In fact, this may have preceded the other two by as many as ten years. One was located at Sinking Spring and the other (now called Bernhart Adam Cemetery) was located less than one half mile from the mouth of the Wyomissing Creek. It would seem that, as far as Episcopalians were concerned, Hugh's family was part of a very small group. Surrounded at this point in time by Baptists, he chose not to join them, but instead, when death came to call (his daughter's), he developed a burial ground on his own plantation, near to the log church on the southeast side of the creek. Some record exists of the interments. At least four stones were removed in the late 1800's. Perhaps these were the only legible ones but this is doubtful. (When I first wrote this article I thought no eyewitness account was ever written about the Welsh graveyard near Shillington.) The only information we had until then was supplied by information handed down through several persons, and originally credited to the remarks of an old woman who claimed to have played among the gravestones as a child during the Revolutionary War. She stated there was a small, decayed wooden structure on it, and that there were 90 to 100 gravestones there.

#### **Documentation Abounds**

Much information was found in legal documents, church accounts, histories and eye witnesses accounts of the development of the land where the graveyard was established by Hugh Jones. The families of the emigrant Peter and his son Jacob are buried at Schwarzwald in Exeter. Jacob gave land in Cumru to his two sons, Jacob and Ludwig. Further investigation needs to be made. The burial locations of the families of Jacob Jr. and Ludwig have not yet been located, nor the site of Ludwig's son John who died in 1887. John's son Daniel who died in 1900 is buried at Sinking Spring Cemetery. The stone Huyett home was built onto the Jones log structure by Dan and his wife Lydia (Gaul) after the death of John.

#### **The Church in Cumru Close By Shillington by Rev. J. W. Early Abstract of Reading Times October 28, 1907**

Hugh Jones, the original owner of the land, secured a rip-saw and sawed some of the oak trees into planks. He fitted them between four upright stakes at the corners. John Hill Sr. was 93 years old when he died. His son, also named John was born, baptized, married and his funeral took place from the house on that farm. This is the place where Rev. Griffith Hughes visited as a missionary and where a subsequent church was established and later replaced by a German Lutheran denomination. Some tombstones were removed by neighbors and used for flagstones or paving stones in neighboring back yards (before 1907). A very few were removed and stored in a place thought to preserve them. Some were secured under the impression that they were from the early Welch Baptist Congregation. Two inscription refer to brothers who both died in 1768. The Episcopal church was established in 1738. The building or church remained standing a considerable time after the disbanding of the Lutheran congregation. At present nothing remains to give evidence of its existence (Early said and thought) except the legal titles to the various tracts in the vicinity; to the codicil to the will of David Jones, the donor; a few broken tombstones which have been carried away; and three or four considerable rows of graves, clearly and plainly marked where those long since departed in lonely solitude are awaiting the resurrection morn. The suggestion that the members of the Grace church, Shillington-Edison, barely half a mile away, should see to it that the graves be enclosed and no longer desecrated by the cattle pasturing in the field in which the resting place of the dead is enclosed, should certainly not be considered amiss.

#### **Justification**

How could all traces of this historic graveyard disappear? Tombstones were removed, human bones were unearthed and moved, but through all the desecration the cemetery *belongs unto itself* and certainly deserves an eternal historic mark of significance. We can try our best to salvage the situation. The intent of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is to glean as much information about the burial site as possible, to organize existing involved parties to attempt to rectify the situation, to educate the public so these situations do not continue to occur, to recognize the significance and contribution of these early settlers of Cumru Township, Berks County, and to perpetuate an appreciation for our culture, history and heritage.

Over 300 historic graveyards were identified in Berks County. Approximately 150 remain today. Of these 150, 79 were considered neglected before the organization of our association in 1994. Today 78% of these are adopted and maintained.

Few historic graveyards remain in this Wyomissing/Cumru area, the plow or bulldozer having turned the remains of the graveyard over and into the earth. Some think these stones make excellent building materials and also rid the site of evidence. To destroy any part of an historic graveyard is illegal in the State of Pennsylvania (known as Historical Burial Places Preservation Act [9 P.S. Sec. 211]). Certainly we would expect more historic graveyards, dated before the advent of church graveyards, to still be in existence today in Berks County and specifically Cumru Township. Your assistance could be very helpful in identifying and preserving any of this evidence so unique to our history and culture. Call 779-3464 to help or to provide more information.

*In this aggressive effort, many authorities were contacted and were most cooperative in providing information to help solve these mysteries. In addition to those mentioned previously, recognition should be given to the historians Barry Nelson, and George Meiser IX. Genealogical background assistance was provided by Elaine Schwar and Sylvia Graybill and the library staff of the Berks County Historical Society. The information that continues to be so invaluable to historians and genealogists is "The Historical and Biographical Annals of Berks County, Pennsylvania" written in two well illustrated volumes by Morton L. Montgomery, 1909.*

**"Blessed be the man that spares these stones, and curst be he that moves my bones." Shakespeare**





**NEGLECTED HISTORIC GRAVEYARDS  
WHICH ARE NOT YET ADOPTED**

Bern Township: Rickenbach  
 Perry Township: Greth  
 Union Township: McGowan  
 Exeter Township: Hechler/Esterly  
 Oley Township: Guldin, Weidner #1  
 Richmond Township: Kieffer, Herbein & Reichert/Dum

**MAJOR MASONRY and/or PRESERVATION  
PROJECTS - FINANCES NEEDED**

Descendants please send in your donations as soon as possible to get on the 1997 work schedule.

Oley:	Bertolet, deTurck, Herbein, Snyder, Peters
Cumru:	High/Hoch
Exeter:	Kline/Close, Ritter
Maxatawny:	Grim, Sassaman, Kemp, Levan
Richmond:	Reichert/Dum
Maidencreek:	Williams
Ontelaunee:	Rickenbach

**1862 ATLAS and INDEX AVAILABLE**

A new edition of the 1862 Berks County land owners Atlas is available with an index for a donation of \$35. The atlas has a soft 9 X 12 cover and 80 pages reprinted in 1988 by Javon Co. from actual surveys by L. Fagen; originally published by H. F. Bridgens. The index contains over 7,000 names of landowners. Township maps are scaled and names clearly legible. Add \$2 for P. & H. or arrange for pick up. Call 610 779-3464.



**MUSICAL REMEMBRANCES**

Profiles of Creative Berks Countians  
 Copiously Illustrated by: Cedric N. Elmer.  
 Cost is \$5. Berksiana Foundation: 1976  
 Add \$4 (maximum postage for both) for P. & H. or arrange for pick up. Call 610 779-3464.

**A LITTLE STEP AWAY**

(author unknown)

To close the eye, to fall asleep  
 To draw a labored breath,  
 To find release from daily cares  
 In what we know as death.

It cannot be, for works of God  
 Are wrought for nobler ends,  
 And those away continue on  
 In the hearts of kin and friends.

In this the crowning of a life,  
 The aim or end thereof?  
 The total sum of consciousness,  
 The ripened fruit of love?

It cannot be, for they live on  
 A little step away.  
 The soul...the everlasting life,  
 Has found a better day.

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\_\_\_\_\_ \$15 Annual membership

\_\_\_\_\_ Donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the association general fund

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**Reading, PA 19606**



## "An Odd Sight in a Graveyard"

Extract from the Reading Weekly, Saturday, February 15, 1902

Illustration: linoleum block

### Aged Stranger Kneeling in the Snow as if in Prayer Copies the Inscriptions of the Tombstones

A strange sight was witnessed at Epler's Church burial ground a few days ago. While several people were passing the cemetery they noticed in the midst of a heavy snowfall a man, apparently past 70 years of age, kneeling near several graves. He had his head bared and bowed, as if in prayer. He was accosted by several persons, but he refused to state his name or to tell whence he came. His manner of speech indicated that he is a man of more than ordinary intelligence, but in all his talk with the residents he has not left a single syllable drop which would indicate his identity. Some persons are of the opinion that he is partially demented. He was first noticed some days ago when he entered the cemetery and began to read the inscriptions on the tombstones. He did this for several hours, then left, but returned. He is not known to any of the residents in that vicinity, and it is the opinion of some that he was a former resident whose relatives lie at rest in the burial ground. Some incline to the belief that he is an inmate of some institution and has wandered away. Where he spends his nights and obtains his meals is not known. The old man carries a tablet with him and as he pauses in front of a tombstone he writes down the inscription.



· The Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation is duly registered as a charitable 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 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION for GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION  
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