

# GRAVE HAPPENINGS



The Kemp family burial ground has been a hard one to get in to work on due to the distance from paved road. It is now being considered in a new development plan to be re-located. The final resting place of Captain George Kemp seems to have been all but forgotten. See more on page 7 and 3.



**Contributors Staff/  
Photos this issue**

- Mike Angstadt
- Betty J Burdan
- Meredith Brunt Goldey
- Karla Hummel
- Gary Koenig
- Les Rohrbach
- Keith Schaffer
- Paul Schumann
- Lara Thomas
- Anne Wagner
- Rod Wagner

## Captain George Kemp, Esquire

Route 222 was once known as the Great Road, connecting colonial Reading to Allentown. Even larger than the well-known Hottenstein home is the building known as the Kemp Tavern or Kemp Hotel. It was one of only two places to stop for food and lodging on the Great Road. John Adams purportedly stayed here. William Ellery, Signer of the Declaration stayed there. It is mentioned in diaries of the time. The life of this great building is tied to George Kemp.

George Kemp is buried on his farm, in what is known as the Kemp Cemetery. But let's start at the beginning. He was a first born American. Born May 6, 1749, there seems to be no church record of his birth, nor birth certificate, because there were no government offices or churches built in the area yet. His father, Theobald Dewald Kemp of Strasbourg on the Rhine (once Germany and now France), was one of the original settlers of Maxatawny Township, before there was even a Berks County.

George was either smart enough (or lucky enough) to marry into one of the richest families in the area, the French Huguenot Levan family. By the mid-1700's, the Levans owned over 1000 acres of what would become some of the best farming in Berks County. Susanna Levan would feature prominently in her father's will and brought both land and ownership of a mill to the wedding in March of 1770. 38 weeks later in December of 1770, son and heir Daniel arrived.

Daniel would be followed by Jacob (1772), George Junior (1775), Dewald (1778), John (1780), Anna Maria (1782) and possibly others. Due to George Junior's name, there is some uncertainty there. George's farm and family did so well, tax lists from the time show growth that any of us would envy. He owned the farm with separate 450 and 550 acres plots, additional 100 acres in Longswamp Township, and 32 acres in Greenwich Township in various years.

The tax records also support what was long thought a family story. Starting in 1785, under the five horses valued at \$39, five cows worth \$10 and a still worth \$10, is the line "1 negro." The negro is considered property and is assessed the value of \$20. No other slaves are listed in this or the surrounding township records. George's total worth is put at over \$500 and he is taxed \$6.00

In 1785, his brother-in-law Daniel Levan sells him the building on the Great Road formerly called the Levan Hotel. In three years' time, George's worth DOUBLES to over \$1000 and he is officially listed as an innkeeper. He constructs a huge addition to the inn with both his and Susanna's names on date stones. He still also owns land, horses and a "negro wench." The first official US census of 1790 shows three free white males over age 16, two free white males under 16, four free white females and one slave. The 1830 census shows George's declining years with he the only adult male (aged 70-80), one male under age 10 (perhaps a grandson?) and one female slave aged 55-100. She is not living at the inn and is obviously not a young woman.

Did George purchase her for help with the inn? Was she already with the inn? What was the relationship like? We can't answer those questions. We do know that in the 1870's it was reported that her name was Hannah and that she was buried in the family cemetery.

What else can records tell us about George Kemp?

The very nature of these articles is to feature veterans. Military records document that in 1777, Washington's army traveled the Great Road heading to Trenton, gathering supplies on the way. The army stopped in the valley between the Kemp and Zimmerman farms. George swore an oath allegiance and joined Colonel Udree's 4<sup>th</sup> Company of the Second Battalion as a captain and wagon master. All evidence points to him being at the battle of Germantown. By 1778, his enlistment ended, and he returned to his commitments at home.

He maintained the public house of Kemp's Tavern for 52 years before passing it to his son John who would run it for another 34 years.

In 1800, Governor Thomas McKean appointed George Kemp a commission as Esquire. In a time with limited judges and lawyers, a squire functioned much as our justice of the peace do today, both adjudicating and officiating. He held this until his death. From 1822 to 1824, George Kemp served as a county commissioner and reported to the Pennsylvania Assembly.

He buried his wife, his father, at least two sons, a granddaughter, a slave and more on his farm. His sister Gertrude, protestant, was buried in the family plot. When George's brother-in-law and fellow Revolutionary War veteran Caspar Wink neared the end of his life, a devout Catholic, he instructed he be buried with his "beloved spouse" and could, because it was a family cemetery, not a church plot. But by the 1850's markers and field stones had shifted, and many graves were unmarked other than by the boundary wall.

A photocopy of George Kemp's will survives. Four pages long, his life allowed him to make various bequests that when totaled reach over \$40,000. He and his sons would help fund what would become St John's Reformed of Kutztown, Kutztown Park and Kutztown Normal School.

He served his family, his community his government, and his country. What a shame for this man and his cemetery to be disturbed.



*Lara Thomas*  
*Secretary,*



At our August meeting we approved more wall work, which will make 3 walls completed by 2020. The final wall will be costly and we hope we can raise the money to complete this project.

We are looking at approximately \$16,000 for the final wall. We could never have done this without the many financial contributions of Reber descendants and the Jacqueline Nein Trust. Pat Reber has been the driving force to fundraising for this to come to reality!

If you are a descendant of this Reber family and want more information we can put you in touch with Pat who has been a huge help with this project.

Pat Reber, (descendant) talks to Keith Schaffer (Stonemason) while tearing down wall number 3 for rebuild.



Many years ago, the white fence around the **Rickenbach** in Bern township was rebuilt as an Eagle Scout project, repainted as a community service project, and last year was damaged beyond simple repair.

**Ed Glausman** has been taking care of this of recent years and erected a chain attached to the fence posts and he lined the

perimeter with stone as temporary fix. From what we know, the Rickenbachs were simple people and this surely would satisfy them. The May Apples have been a pretty weed deterrent inside seasonally, but the surrounding area gets pretty thick without the routine care of Ed. Ed also takes care of the lock along the river trail on Washington Rd in Bern Township.



## Letter from Les

BCAGP is beginning to stir. Our covid-19 hibernation is ending. Spring activities were put on hold with the governor's shutdown orders in March. Since then the BCAGP Board has had two meetings, both outside, to which the public was not invited for distancing and safety reasons. As we have become more accustomed to living with covid-19 we hope to cautiously begin resuming a more normal schedule of activities.

Our next meeting, October 4, will be open though it will be outside under the Oley Legion's pavilion. Members and the public will be welcome but will need to be prepared for the weather and practice social distancing. We likely will have a November meeting quite possibly in the small Oley Legion building. The meeting and location will be discussed during the October meeting considering the covid-19 conditions at that time. Given that our annual membership meeting occurs in February and that officers and directors must be elected then, the meetings prior to that allow us to ascertain individuals desiring to fill positions and for candidates to be nominated.

While meetings have been curtailed and Oley High students were not able to perform their annual service maintaining graveyards, BCAGP has continued activities that do not require numbers of people to congregate. Keith was occupied with rebuilding a wall at the Reber graveyard, and did repairs to the walls at the Barto graveyard and the cap at the Levan graveyard in Maxatawny. Two other projects found us. The Hoch family requested financial support for a cap replacement on their family graveyard and a section of wall that fell in at the Schneider graveyard was repaired before a larger problem developed.

Several BCAGP members and volunteers continued their individual efforts through the summer to maintain graveyards. This will aid us as we plan a fall work schedule at the October meeting. Hopefully we can get to a few more graveyards than normal to counter some of our inaction in the spring.



**Schlegel burial ground  
in Fleetwood**

We have arranged with Kutztown University to perform another ground penetrating radar study for us. If covid-19 conditions on campus allow, the **Schlegel** graveyard in Richmond township will be evaluated in October. Also in October we meet with the Nein Trust which largely funds the masonry work that we do. Since the Trust gave us money in advance of their expected distribution a year ago, we are uncertain of when more funds will be coming to us.

**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 coolest thing happened last month.. While surfing Facebook, I came upon a post that I wanted to share with everyone.

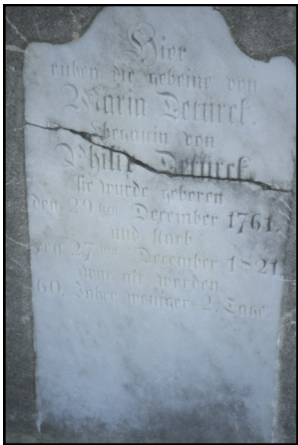
First let me tell you that [Berks County Genealogy](#) is a group on Facebook, started and run by **Glenn Koch** and is full of fascinating things for those of us liking to step back in time and examine our Berks County roots.

A post caught my eye by **Meredith Brunt Goldey** about a treasure chest she inherited. The chest belonged to her 5x great grandmother Marie Bertolet Hoch Deturk (1761-1821). Inside the chest were quilts and other handmade goodies including a "death cloth"! As she began to tell what she found, I was seeing familiar names. A quilt was made by Susanna Herbein Knab Deturk (1795-1855). We know we have been to work in the family burial grounds of Deturk, Herbein, Knabb and Bertolet so my interest was peaked! Meredith went on to share fabulous old portraits of William Deturk, Anna Butz, Hannah Kohler, John Deisher, Eugene P. Deturk and Elizabeth "Lizzie" Deisher. How amazing to be gifted with something so unique and special!

Thank you to Meredith for sharing your story and showing us your special gifts!



Deturk burial ground  
Photo taken by Mike Angstadt  
2017 Oley Day of Caring



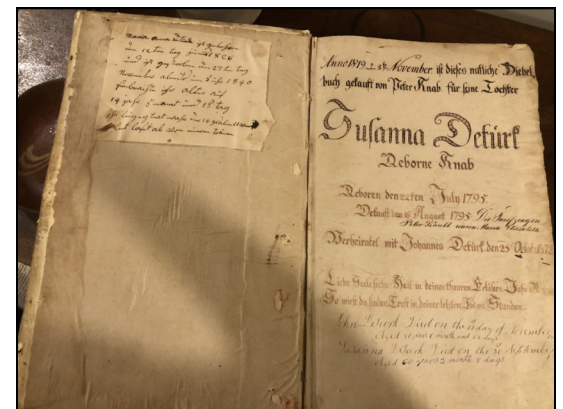
Tombstones of Maria (Hoch) Deturk owner of the chest, and Susanna (Knab) Deturk, maker of the quilt in the Deturk Family burial ground in Oley.



Photos thanks to Meredith Brunt Goldey



Trunk belonging to Maria Hoch Deturk with her initials carved with 1779.



Bible belonging to Susanna Knab DeTurk with a note attached regarding Maria DeTurk death on the left. (note difference in spelling of Knab on the tombstone as Knabb). Gifted to her in 1819, published in 1765.

Anne Wagner  
VP BCAGP

# Barto



Repair  
work  
on  
caps

# LeVan



## Money Spent From Pipeline/OVHA Grant

In April we mentioned a grant was given to [Oley Valley Heritage Association](#) from DTE Midstream, to be distributed in accordance with stipulations for use in the Oley area. OVHA distributed \$5,000 to BCAGP for use in Oley area historic burial grounds.

As it turned out there is plenty of work needed in Oley burial grounds so we were able to use that money appropriately very quickly.

1. We contributed half of the cost matched by Mark Hoch family members to replace the badly rotting capping in the Hoch burial ground walls on Bertolet Mill Road. (\$2,870.00)
2. We repaired and sealed caps at the Barto burial ground which sits on the grounds of the Reading Motorcycle Club. (\$1,300.00).



3. We repaired a fallen section at the Schneider burial ground off Oley Turnpike road at the Hetrick farm, before the rest would fall down. (\$1,000.00)

**The historic Kemp graveyard in Maxatawny Township may become concrete if developers get approval for a new project.** Duke Realty, headquartered in Indianapolis, is in the process of planning a 284 acre site for truck warehousing along Route 222 at Long Lane, Hottenstein and Hilltop Roads. The site, known as Maxatawny Logistics Park, would be a 2.8 million square foot distribution warehouse, would encompass the north side of Rt. 222.

In the very midst of the proposed site lies the Kemp burial ground. As far as we have been able to determine, Duke Realty has already gone to court, presented the argument that no direct descendants have been found, and with the approval of the property owner received the necessary permissions to remove and relocate the human remains from the graveyard. These include Kemp, Levan, Bieber and Siegfried family members with 15 inscribed stones, 3 inscribed fieldstones, and 3 unmarked fieldstone. At least one veteran is interred there. In addition, one slave, Hannah, who appears on the census as “negro wench” was reported to be buried at the site.

So, what happens now? We would like the site to remain intact! If that cannot be, descendants have been located, and hopefully more will come forward, to voice their opinions on where the site could be relocated. BCAGP hopes for a full archaeological survey to remove any remains and relics. We would also like to see the new site built to the specifications of the original, with thick brick walls – a very unusual and expensive feature at the time of their erection --and use of the ornamental wrought iron gate. We have requested any and all documentation relating to the Kemp site from the proposal process thus far under the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law. Our repeated requests for information from the PA Historical and Museum Commission have had no response.

PennDOT has suggested the necessity of a 5 lane roundabout in the area of Hottenstein Rd. The warehousing development would lie within feet of the 1783 Hottenstein mansion, part of the National Register of Historic Places and owned by the Historic Preservation Trust of Berks County.

We find it exceptionally unfortunate that this matter was not divulged until after proceedings were already so far underway , and hope to influence further discussions on the matter. Interested parties can view developments on Facebook on the page “Maxatawny Warehouse at Hottenstein Road.”



Karla Hummel  
 2nd VP BCAGP  
 BerksEpitaphs@gmail.com

## Tombstones 101 by Betty J Burdan and Chris Schultz

When the genealogist is out there scouring the public cemeteries and private grave yards, they will encounter tombstones carved in German script. To confuse matters further there is Old German Script and New German Script, plus each carver adds his own style and flourishes.

With a general knowledge of what you might find on the German tombstone (i.e. birth date, death date, age, marital status, parents) and the order you might find it in, the following German terms and their English meaning may be useful as you attempt to decipher those headstones.

This is only a guide and remember dialects will influence the words you find, and spelling varies. Also, remember, the German language endings on a word or the separating articles used will be influenced by the gender of the subject. German uses different words and endings for each the masculine and feminine gender.

Possessive forms you may encounter are: mein (my), dein (your singular), sein (his, its), ihr (her, it), unser (our), euer (your), ihr (their), and Ihr (formal your). Old tombstones will be in an older unused version of words and may not be the same as current German. You may encounter words not found on these lists. Use your best judgment and Good Luck in your hunt.

### Tombstone German German-American/English

Hier.....Here	Storben.....Dead or to die	Sein Gantzes/Ganz Alter...His whole age was or he was [no. of years] years old
Ruhet.....Rests, (masculine)	Gestorben...Died, past tense	Zeugen/Zeugte...Fathered or begat [children]
Ruhen.....Rests, (feminine)	Jahr / Jahren.....Year / Years	Kind / Kinder.....Child or Children
Er Ruhet.....He rests	Monat / Monaten.....Month [names of months are similar enough to recognize]	Sohne.....Son
Sie Rhuet.....She rests	Tag / Tagen....Day or Days	Tochter.....Daughter
Im Gott.....In God	Kind von.....Child of	Herr/ Herrn.....Lord
Er Wurde.....He became (as in born)	Sohn von/Sohnes von....Son of or Sons of	Im Herr/Herrn....In Lord or God
Sie Wurde.....She became (as in born)	Tochter/Tochtern von.....Daughter of or Daughters of	Im Unsers Herrn.....In our Lord or God
Er War....He was	Verheiratet/Verhilichte mit...Married to or married with	Gott...God
Sie War....She was	Frau .....Woman/wife/	Jahren von Herrn....Year of our Lord
Geboren....Born	Frauline ....young unmarried female	Leichen/Leichten text...Funeral Text
Er wurde geboren....He was born	Ehefrau....Wife	Denkmal....memorial [used on stones in the 1800s].
Sie wurde geboren...She was born	Seine/Seiner Ehefrau war ..His wife was	
Eine wurd't gebahren...She was born		
Und ist.....And is		

Two phrases that crop up from time to time on and the top line of German headstones are: "zum Andenken an" ..... "in memory of" or "in remembrance of." "Forget me not" and "grab statte von" translates to something like "final resting place of" or "burial place of". ["grab" means grave, "statte" means permanent home, "von" means of].

### There are Grammatical Effects on German Names

Gender and grammar affect German word endings. Feminine names often end with **-in**. For example, *Barbara Meyer* may appear as *Barbara Meyerrin*. Germans occasionally use **-chen** and **-lein** as diminutive endings meaning "little". *Gretchen Herman*. Could be translated *little Greta (Margaret)*. The endings **-s** or **-es** show possession. *Hermann Josefs Sohn* would mean *Joseph's son*

Example: St. Joseph's Hill Church Cemetery, Pike Township.

Translation: "In Memory of Jonathan, son of Benneville and Hannah Schoch he was born the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 1850." The death date is underground and unreadable.





# THANK YOU!

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have not been doing much for group get togethers. Plenty of graveyard work has been getting done though by individuals. I hesitate to do a list like this because I know many different are caring for different burial grounds either sporadically or regularly and I am always afraid to miss someone, but these are what has been brought to our attention of recent. If you are caring for a burial ground even if its not a regular thing, please send me or Les a message or email and let us know so we have an idea of what is being done. (Awagner615@aol.com)

- ✓ Members of the **Washington Camp 230 POSA** have been working on the Ritter and the Young.
- ✓ **Neil Thomas, Lara Thomas, Micah Thomas** and **Aiden Emmerich** have been working on the Fix-Gerber-Bitting.
- ✓ **Gary Koenig** has been making his rounds through Oley including Keim, Koenig, Nein, Jean Bertolet and Schneider. (there may be others)
- ✓ **David Schlegel** has been doing his regulars all through Fleetwood and Oley including the Schlegel, Hoch, Ohlinger, Reichart Dum (St Henry), Williams, Schmehl, Schneider, Rothermel and Kauffman (and others).
- ✓ **Michael Brady** has been helping at regular cemeteries as needed with tombstone resetting/repairing.
- ✓ **Ed Gensemer** has been at Aulenbachs regularly. This is the home of the Aulenbach family reserve which was the Aulenbach family's plot before it became a public cemetery.
- ✓ **Paul Schumann** has been keeping the Barnet Peter perfect all year again.
- ✓ **Ed Glausman** has been doing the Rickenbach and had to make some repairs.
- ✓ **Anthony Funez** and **Nathan Strause** have been doing the Kirby, Thanks to Gordene Randolph.
- ✓ **John Julian** has been keeping up the LeVan in Maxatawny.
- ✓ **Reading Motorcycle Club** does the Barto and the Weiser/DeTurk in Oley.
- ✓ **Elizabeth Risser** mows the inside of the Reber and **Marshall Lytle** does the outside.
- ✓ **John and Christine Wisniewski** have for many years maintained the Knabb.
- ✓ From Pine Grove, **Arlene Kutz Ingram** and **Gerald Kutz** of Kutz Farm Equipment maintain the Kutz.
- ✓ **Keith Schaffer** has been doing odds and ends as needed.



Reber burial ground  
Photo and work by Keith Schaffer



Koenig burial ground  
Photo and work by Gary Koenig

## 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 next board meeting of BCAGP will be October 4th, OUTSIDE at the Oley Legion Hall at 2PM. Members are invited to attend this meeting with the understanding we must social distance, and may have to wear masks if we must be too close. We are trying to be as “covid careful” as possible as most of our members are seniors. There does seem to be plenty of room outside that we can do this safely and according to guidelines.

Keep in mind that this February we will be **electing officers and board members** again. If you are interested in being on the board, or wish to nominate someone for officer or board member, please contact our secretary Lara Thomas, or make your intent known at any meeting prior.



Article VII section 2 of our by-laws state: The Board of Directors shall be composed of at (7)least seven and no more than eleven (11) members, including the five (5) officers.

Qualified candidates must have been a member for no less than 6 months. The term is a 2 year term.

Photo (left) from August 30,2020 outdoor meeting

# 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 - 2021

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 \_\_\_\_\_

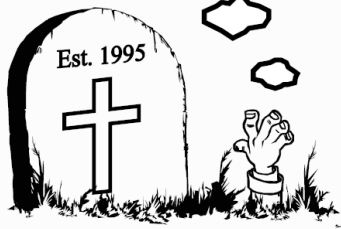
Mail Checks to: B.C.A.G.P., PO Box 3707, Reading, PA 19606

Membership runs a calendar year January to December. Membership dues paid after October 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](http://www.bcagp.org)  
for meetings times



PO BOX 3707

READING PA 19606



[WWW.BCAGP.ORG](http://WWW.BCAGP.ORG)



## BERKS COUNTY ASSOCIATION FOR GRAVEYARD PRESERVATION

### Officers and Board of Directors

(email addresses on the website)



**Les Rohrbach, President 610-323-1703**  
**Anne Wagner, Vice President 610-926-5036**  
**Karla Hummel, 2nd Vice President 610-987-9569**  
**Paul Schumann, Treasurer 484-529-8682**  
**Lara Thomas, Secretary 610-914-5534**



**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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Check the [www.bcagp.org](http://www.bcagp.org) website for internet edition newsletter archives in full color!

