Oley Valley Heritage Association

NEWSLETTER

April, 2013

30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

of the

Oley Valley Heritage Association

The public is invited!

"Preserving Our Heritage in the Oley Valley"

Presented by Phoebe Hopkins and Zachary Pyle

When: Saturday, April 20, 2013

Doors open at 4:00 p.m.

Dinner will be served at 5:00 p.m.

Location: Oley Valley Fair Centre Building

26 Jefferson Street, Oley, PA

A family-style dinner of roast beef and turkey
will be catered by
Moyer's Catering of Boyertown.

Tickets $12.00 per person

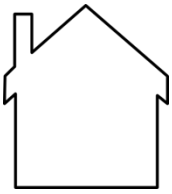
Call Darlene Dillon at (610) 944-9503 to purchase tickets.

Deadline to purchase tickets is April 10, 2013.

Log Barns Program

Did you attend our last program? On November 19, 2012, Greg Huber provided an interesting and informative slide program on "Ancient Heritage Will Not Disappear – LOG BARNS living and breathing in Berks County." 91 people attended.

Home for Us



Do you have any suggestions about a home for us? We are still interested in finding a home for our organization. Why do we want a home? Currently, we have our board meetings at the Oley Township Municipal Building and have artifacts and other items stored elsewhere. Our goal is to have a place where we could hold board meetings and programs for the public, to have a place where people can donate antique Oley Valley items, and to create a museum to display these antique Oley Valley items. The Oley Valley has so much history, and we'd like to save these treasures.

30th Anniversary Ornament

Have you purchased a 30th Anniversary Ornament yet?

In celebration of our 30th anniversary, the OVHA contacted Clay on Main, a local non-profit cooperative clay studio in Oley which offers classes, workshops and lectures, to produce a limited edition commemorative ornament of the Association's logo featuring the DeTurk house originally created by the late Gerald H. Yoder of Oley Valley Redware. Studio members designed and painted each individual ornament, making no two alike.

If you haven't purchased an ornament and would like one, the ornament will be for sale at our 30th Anniversary Celebration on April 20, 2013 and anytime at Christa's Country Creations. Christa's is located at the intersection of Water Street and Stitzer Road in Oley. The price is $15 and includes tax.

For those who need the ornament shipped, please refer to our order form online at www.oleyvalleyheritage.org. For those who wish to order an ornament but do not have access to the internet, please include your order on a piece of paper and mail to OVHA, P.O. Box 401, Oley, PA 19547-0401. Please remember to include an additional $5.00 per ornament for shipping and handling.

U R G E N T

The Oley Valley Heritage Association needs a Treasurer!

Do you have accounting experience and know how to use a computer? We need your help. Please call Darlene Dillon at (610) 944-9503 to volunteer for this board of director's position.

Photo Identification

We received the following information from Eileen Prussman on Photo 3 from our November, 2012 newsletter. Here is what Eileen reported.

"I'm fairly certain that Photo 3 in the OVHA newsletter is my old home on Lobachsville Road. It no longer has the 2nd floor porch or the shutters, but everything else is pretty much the same. The house address when we lived there was Box 145. I don't know its current street address. It is at the top of the hill overlooking Pikeville on the right going toward Lobachsville before Lobachs Church on the left.

The house was built in 1876 by George and Emma Keim. All of the original deeds were passed on to me by Mrs. Essig when we purchased the house and we passed them on to the folks who bought it from us. Hopefully, the present owners still have those.

The wall out front was built using stones from the Chimney Rocks using a wagon that was specially made to transport them. The large stone threshold at the back door also came from the Chimney Rocks.

A small bathroom was added by Mr. Essig in the 1950s on the second floor at the top of the stairs, and it has a window facing the front. I assume that was previously a small hall leading to the door opening onto the second story porch."

We also heard from Richard Yoder of Bechtelsville about the above property. He tells us that a German stone cutter quarried the stone from a quarry behind Steve Kindig's place in Lobachsville near Chimney Rocks, and that the stone cutter lived in the house for a while. The millstones at the Lobachsville mill were quarried from the same quarry as the stones used in the house.

Thank you, Eileen and Richard, for the information!

Photo Identification

We need your help! Are you able to identify the following photos? If so, please call Mary Ellen Lash at (610) 987-6414, Doug Wegman at (610) 944-8437, or Doris Lorah at (610) 987-6167. Or, you may email us at OVHA@oleyvalleyheritage.org.

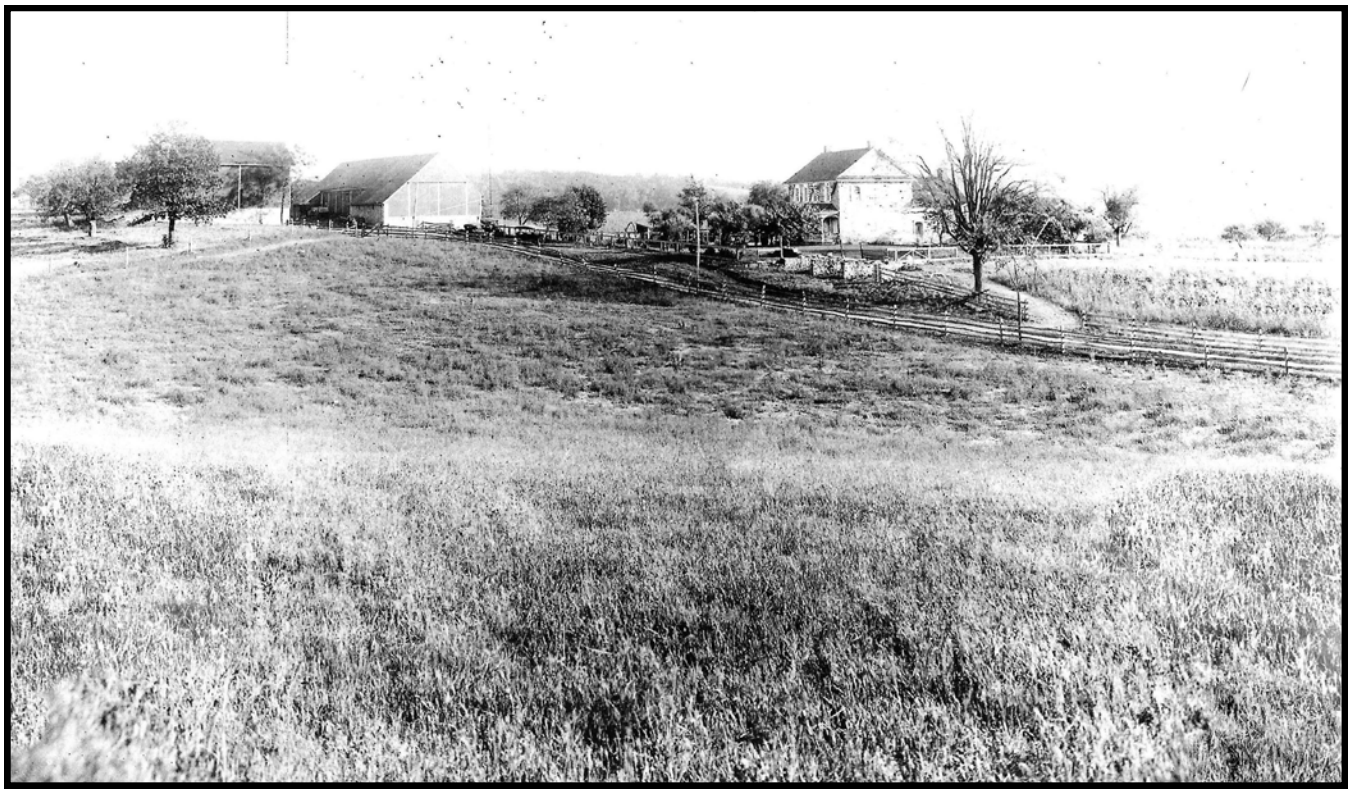


Photo 1

Photo Archives

We're still in the process of collecting photos of the Oley Valley from the 1950s and earlier. If you have any, know of someone who has photos, or if someone you know has passed away and left photos, please do not throw them away. We're looking for any photos from the Oley Valley. That area would consist of Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township, Alsace Township and Pike Township. We will scan your photos, save them for our photo archives, and possibly use them in a second book. Your photos will be returned to you. If you'd like to share photos with our organization, please contact Mary Ellen Lash at (610) 987-6414, Doug Wegman at (610) 944-8437, or Doris Lorah at (610) 987-6167.

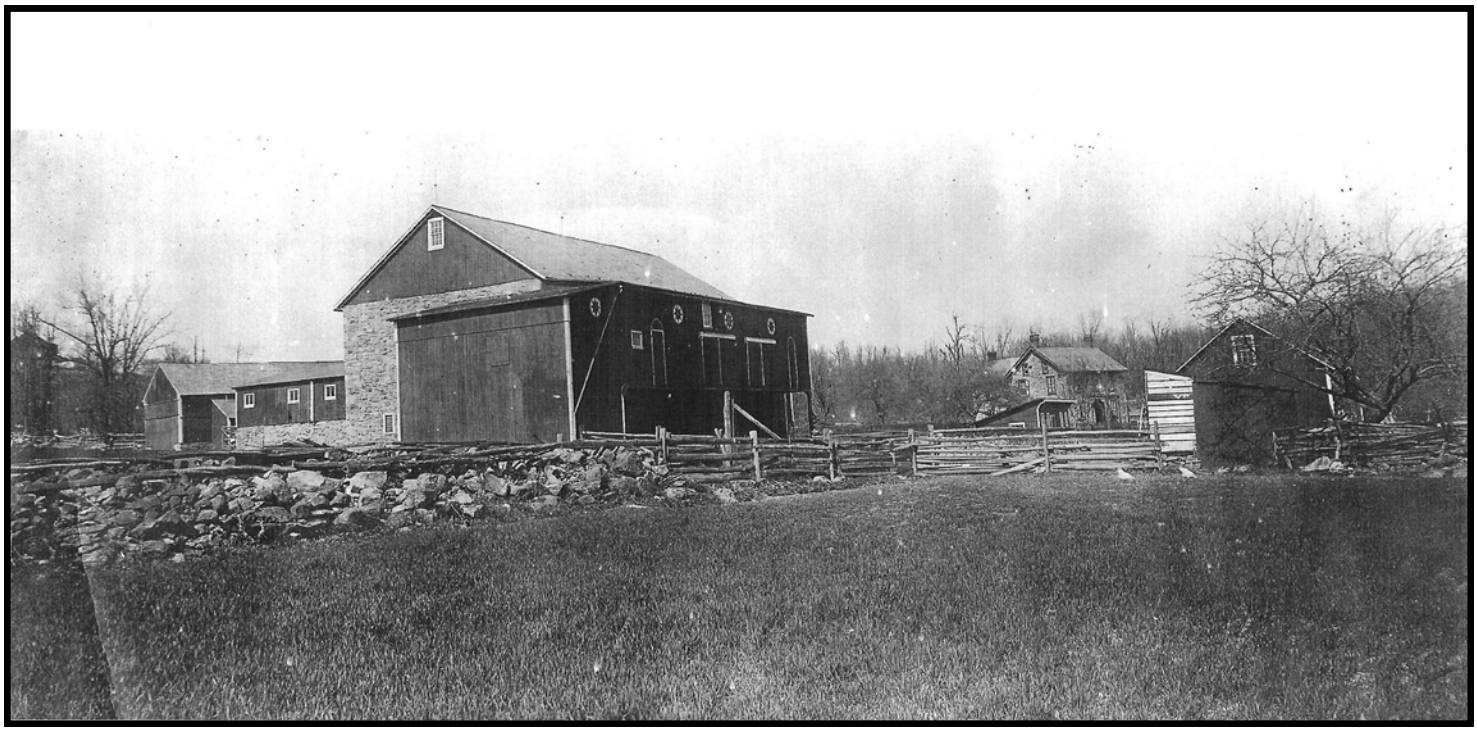


Photo 2

What Items Does OVHA Have For Sale?

Books:

"The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey" $35 (includes tax)
A hard cover book featuring over 400 vintage photographs in more than 250 pages published by OVHA in 2010. Available for purchase at Yellow House Hotel, Yellow House; Christa's Country Creations, Oley; Evelyn & Harriett's, Pleasantville; Riverview Nursery, Pricetown Road; and Saucony Book Shop, Kutztown.

"Annals of the Oley Valley" **by Rev. P. C. Croll, D.D.** $22 (includes tax)
Originally published in 1926. Reprinted by OVHA in 2010. The *Annals* details the history of families who settled in the Oley Valley and is a treasure for those doing genealogical research.
Available for purchase at Evelyn & Harriett's, Pleasantville; Riverview Nursery, Pricetown Road; and Saucony Book Shop, Kutztown.

"Fragments of the Past" **by Dr. Peter G. Bertolet.** $20 (includes tax)
Originally published by the Women's Club of Oley Valley in 1980. Reprinted by OVHA in 2012. The Women's Club created this publication from a manuscript of over 400 pages written by Dr. Peter G. Bertolet who practiced medicine in the Oley Valley from the mid-1840's until his death in 1865.
Available for purchase at Evelyn & Harriett's, Pleasantville and Riverview Nursery on Pricetown Road.

30th Anniversary Ornament $15 (includes tax)
Available for purchase at Christa's Country Creations, Oley.

Collectibles $15 (includes tax)
DeBenneville Barn, Oley Valley Inn, Johan DeTurk House, Fisher Home, Knabb-Bieber Mill, and Hunter Bank Barn.
Available for purchase at Christa's Country Creations, Oley.

All of the above items can also be purchased on our website: www.oleyvalleyheritage.org (additional shipping and handling charges will be added) and at our Anniversary Celebration on April 10th.

Memories of the Oley Valley

We received some new Memories from our members, friends and board members. We're always looking for new Memories. We're interested in nostalgia or memories of out-of-date practices (those things typically not done today). Do you have any memories to add? We'd like to hear from you, our members. Please email or write to us and include your phone number in case we have any questions. Your memory may be included in the next newsletter. Please be brief.

The Oley Valley
I remember when…

"A hurricane flooded our cellar and our kids floated around in a rubber raft." *Submitted by Rod Burkert.*

"Loading my lawn tractor in the station wagon to cut the grass on the old little league field." *Submitted by Rod Burkert.*

"When Jim Rhodes and I would haul the playground kids to away games for baseball when Jim was the coach." *Submitted by Rod Burkert.*

"I remember the 'Watkins Man' (Howard Manwiller) coming to our house maybe monthly to sell his wares. He had funny stories to tell and also made animal noises to make us laugh." *Submitted by Erma Miller.*

"I remember going to the house where Naomi Gehret lives at 615 Main St, Oley. Her father had a barber shop there. My grandfather would take my brother and me there to get haircuts." *Submitted by Darlene Dillon.*

"My very first pair of 'jeans' were bought at Glase's Store at 346 Main Street, Oley." *Submitted by Darlene Dillon.*

"Murphy's bus ran from Reading to Boyertown by way of Oley and back. It would stop along the highway to pick up passengers and drop you off along its route." *Submitted by Darlene Dillon.*

"I remember my grandmother taking the rag rugs (about 15 to 20 feet long), hang them on the washline during housecleaning time and beat them with a broom. Then with the aid of another person, shake the rugs. Sometimes I was that other person helping." *Submitted by Darlene Dillon.*

"Homer delivered meat for Conrad's Meat Market. He had a hook for a hand. Homer was his correct name. It was previously reported that his name was Elmer" *Submitted by John Noll.*

"Heffley's Bakery was located at what is now Clay on Main, 313 Main Street. Edgar Shollenberger was the delivery man. He had a small truck and made daily rounds delivering bread and other items. A popular item was their crumb cake that was eaten at breakfast. Day old bread delivered to your door was 5 cents a loaf." *Submitted by John Noll.*

"Wayne Reider, who owned the farm at the junction of Mill and Reider Roads, owned two mules and a horse. I remember Wayne plowing and doing other farming with his mules as late as 1960 because his hills were too steep for his two Farmall tractors." *Submitted by Steve Lendacki*.

"I remember my grandfather, Joe Mest, telling me that Forgedale Road was the main route used by folks traveling from Kempton through Kutztown to Philadelphia. Travelers often stopped at Edelman's tavern at the junction of Beck Road and Forgedale Roads. Edelman's Tavern was known as the Soppawatz House. Down the road a short distance on the same side of the road is a cave that was used for a ground cellar. The ground cellar is located at the edge of the road. Farmers taking produce and perishable goods like butter and eggs to market in Philadelphia would stop at the Soppawatz house and unload their wagons in the ground cellar for the night because it was cool and would help preserve their goods. A man by the last name of Straka ran the hotel and sold candy, cigars, root beer, birch beer and of course, liquor." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

"Henry Fox had a birch distillery on the edge of Forgedale Road. Robby Keller and Webster cut birch shoots or young birch all winter long. Webster was also a Fox, younger brother of Henry. Henry Fox also had a birch distillery below Pleasantville." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

"John Lendacki, owner of the Oley Furnace Gristmill, picking up 100 lb. feed bags and slinging them over his shoulder." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

"My mother went to Mrs. Fred Keller for powwowing. It stopped her nosebleeds." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

"I learned powwowing from my father, Walter Deisher, who was a practitioner. He used potatoes and onions to cure warts." *Submitted by Helen Readinger.*

"My father, Walter S. Deisher, was a dairy farmer in Ruscombmanor Township and delivered milk to people between Fleetwood and Pricetown at 5 cents per quart." *Submitted by Helen Readinger.*

"My grandfather, Joe Mest, was a carpet weaver. He bought a farm on Forgedale Road around 1850 and started a peach orchard. Baskets of peaches stacked two high on a wagon were taken to Clouser's Crossing, which was below Pleasantville, to be taken by trolley to Reading. Joe Mest was the only peach grower in the area. In those days, peach trees were not trimmed back nor were the dwarf varieties." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

"An attorney named Sheman Houder, who had been a member of the Oley Valley Hunting Club, built the cottages on the far side of the dam from the clubhouse which is on Forgedale Road." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

"The Oley Valley Hunting Club was first located on Forgedale Road above Tri Town Park." *Submitted by Wayne Readinger.*

OLEY VALLEY
HERITAGE ASSOCIATION
P O Box 401
Oley, PA 19547-0401

Memories of the Oley Valley continued...

"I remember the barbershop in Oley at what is now Oley Valley Pet Salon at 500 Main Street. Red Schaeffer and Ralph Rauenzahn were the barbers." *Submitted by Susie Harvan.*

"I remember when we had lots of snow during the winter months. We used to go snowmobiling. A group of us would leave from near the Oley Legion Diner and go over the hills and end up near a small diner that was across the street from C. S. Garber & Sons on the Boyertown Pike. Once there, the adults would order coffee and I would always order hot chocolate." *Submitted by Susie Harvan.*

"Women and girls wearing rubber bathing caps to go swimming in the pool." *Submitted by Susie Harvan.*

"My brother and sisters would use a refrigerator door in deep snow as a toboggan on Wayne Reider's hills. We tried sheet metal roofing for sledding as well but liked the door better. The edges of the sheet metal were too sharp." *Submitted by Steve Lendacki.*

OVHA Board Members:
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Judith Merkel, *Secretary*

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Mary Ellen Lash
Robert Lesko
Doris Lorah
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