Oley Valley Heritage Association

NEWSLETTER

November, 2014

Covered Bridges of Berks County

Presented by **Fred J. Moll**

Everyone is invited to attend!

Pleasantville Covered Bridge

Program is FREE. Membership is not required but would be greatly appreciated.

Sponsored by Oley Valley Heritage Association

Program will include:

- Penn Street Covered Bridge
- Schuylkill Avenue Covered Bridge
- Lancaster Avenue Covered Bridge
- Stoudt's Ferry Covered Bridge
And many others.
- Special emphasis on the 2002 to 2004 restoration of the Pleasantville Covered Bridge.

When:	Monday, November 10, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.
Where:	Oley Fair Centre Building 26 Jefferson Street, Oley, PA

Fred J. Moll

Fred J. Moll is a historian on covered bridges, author of six bridge books, photographer, member of the Historical Society of Berks County, The Theordore Burr Covered Bridge Society of Pennsylvania, and the National Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges.

Complimentary light refreshments will be provided after the program.

A brief general membership meeting will be held prior to the program.

Board Member Resignation

The Board of Directors accepted the resignation of **Patricia DeGrazia** at their board meeting on April 21, 2014. Although Patricia will no longer be a member of the board, she plans to fully support our organization in any way she can.

New Board Member

Lynn Lorah was approved to be a member of the Board of Directors on April 21, 2014.

Lynn's position on the board was previously held by Patricia DeGrazia. We welcome Lynn to the board.

Election of Directors

In accordance with the OVHA bylaws, the annual membership meeting will be held on November 10, 2014 prior to our program. The agenda includes the election of directors for a term of three years. Those directors up for election include: Doris Lorah, Richard Shaner, Doug Wegman, Mary Williams and Steve Fisher. Anyone interested in holding one of these positions should appear at the membership meeting or express your interest in a position in writing prior to that meeting. Voting will take place at the November 10th meeting.

OVHA Board Photo

OVHA Board of Directors on August 18, 2014

(left to right, seated) Lucille "Susie" Harvan, Deborah Pook, Mary Williams, Darlene Dillon, Lynn Lorah, Richard Shaner. (left to right, standing) Judith Merkel, Kelly Spatz, Margaret McCloskey, Doris Lorah, Carl Brown, Doug Wegman, Steve Fisher, Eugene Richard. Absent from photo: Mary Ellen Lash.

You are invited!

Members are invited to attend our board meetings which are held at the Oley Township Municipal Building at 7:00 p.m. the 3rd Monday of every month except December. If you are in doubt about a meeting being held, please call Darlene Dillon at (610) 944-9503. You are always welcome to join us!

Membership Renewal

Time to renew your membership! If you received this newsletter, you are a member of the Oley Valley Heritage Association or are an organization that supports our cause.

Membership runs on a calendar year from January to December. Any membership dues that we receive after the Oley Fair will be applied to the next membership year. So, if you paid your dues after the Oley Fair this year, your 2015 membership is paid.

What do you receive for your membership?

- Two newsletters per year mailed to your home.
- Two free programs per year historical in nature and related to the Oley Valley.
- The opportunity to support an organization dedicated to the historical, artistic and cultural heritage of the Oley Valley.

Please consider renewing your membership. A membership envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Also, if you know of someone who'd like to join, please invite them to our November program, or let us know and a membership envelope will be mailed to them. If you have access to a computer, a membership form is also available for printing on our website, www.oleyvalleyheritage.org.

Fraktur Program

On April 7, 2014, Lisa Minardi presented a very educational program entitled "Pennsylvania German Fraktur: From A to Z." What is fraktur? Fraktur are colorful documents made by the Pennsylvania Germans during the 1700s and 1800s. Often decorated with flowers, hearts and birds, most are birth and baptismal certificates or teaching pieces.

Her presentation included many slides depicting various styles and forms of fraktur. Approximately 100 people attended.

Upcoming Spring Program

The topic of our Spring program will be on textiles and the speaker will be Alan Keyser. The date of the program is Monday, April 13, 2015 at 7:00 p.m., and the place will be at the Oley Fair Centre Building. More information will be forthcoming in 2015.

Facebook

Oley Valley Heritage Association is on Facebook! Look for Oley Valley Heritage Association, add our organization as one of your Friends, and help us spread the word about OVHA! We will be adding posts relating to the Oley Valley. We look forward to your comments.

250th Anniversary Commemorative Quilt

When the students returned to the Oley Valley Elementary School in August this year, there was something new in their school. The 250th Anniversary Commemorative quilt was mounted on a brick wall directly down the hall from the elementary school office.

In 1990 a commemorative quilt was created for Oley's 250th Anniversary. The quilt was intended to be permanently on display in the Oley Valley Elementary School and was mounted on a wooden rack created by the late Harold Wiest. For a time, it was displayed at the Bank of Boyertown in Oley and the Historical Society of Berks County. To protect this treasure, the Oley Valley Heritage Association provided funding to have the rack suitably framed and rehung to protect it from dust, light, etc. What a beautiful quilt! What a wonderful treasure for the Oley Valley to have!

OVHA was able to obtain the following description of the quilt from the committee who created it.

"The Making of a Commemorative Quilt"

In the Fall of 1989, folks of the Oley sewing community were invited to create a raffle quilt, as part of the festivities commemorating the 250th anniversary of the formation of the Township of Oley. Jane LeVan was in charge of the committee and Helen Refi was appointed to design and organize the construction of the quilt. After much ambivalence, whether to use a traditional set for the design or a more contemporary artistic approach, a very traditional center block, surrounded with smaller blocks was selected.

Most of the design is symbolic to the Oley Valley:

The 250th anniversary logo— contains furrows of a field, symbolic of the fertile Oley Valley, over which a cluster of white oak leaves and acorns are placed.

The tree in the middle of the road – believed to have been planted by Swedish settlers about 250 years ago as a marker to indicate boundaries between properties was appropriately selected as a motif on the quilt. The white oak trunk is labeled with the original inhabitants of the valley, the Lenni Lenape Indians of the greater Delaware tribe. The branches are labeled with all the European immigrants that settled here, together contributing to the rich heritage that Oley Township enjoys today.

The pioneer and Indian – taken from the school seal of the Oley Valley School District. The early inhabitants realized the importance of education and were fundamental in the establishment of schools, not only for the education of young children, but for training the teachers to teach them.

White oak leaves – In the surrounding blocks the white oak leaf motif is again used. Also included in these blocks are the names of the original petitioners. The acorn was used as the quilting motif.

Quilting in the center panel – include, again the white oak leaves and acorn clusters in each corner. These are connected with the traditional feather design. On either side, under the township, pioneer and Indian are quilted cornucopias, symbolizing the bounty of the fertile Oley Valley.

After the quilt was completely assembled, quilted and labeled, the 250th anniversary committee decided that the quilt should remain in the Valley as a permanent symbol of the anniversary. An alternate quilt was used as the raffle quilt, thus allowing succeeding generations to enjoy the quilt and be part of the glorious 250th anniversary celebration.

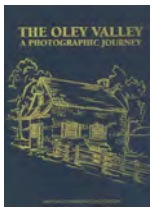
On the back of the quilt is a list of the people who were involved in creating the quilt. They were:

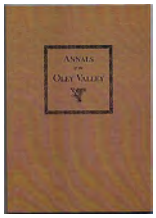
Design: Helen Refi
Applique:
- **Logo panel** – Laura Rhoads
- **Leaves -** Joan Apgar, Laurel Denne, Hilda Fisher, Jeanne Gansel, Olive Reppert, Eleanor Rothenberger, Catharine Schlegel, Eleanor Shaner, Alice Trout
- **Oak Tree –** Jean Deysher
- **Indian, pioneer, map –** Helen Refi

Letter embroidery:
- **Leaf panels –** Willi Bechtel
- **Center panel –** Edna Dautrich

Assembly: Mildred Mast
Marking: Helen Refi
Quilting: Carrie Knabb, Laura Rhoads, Eleanor Shaner, Alice Trout, Mary Hartline, Katie Gift, Janet Bond, Rachael Keller
Binding: Mary Christman
Donation of supplies: Joan Mege, Carrie Knabb

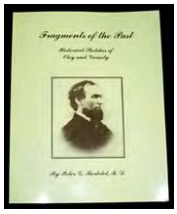
Items for Sale





Books:
- ***The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey*** **$35** (includes tax)
- ***Annals of the Oley Valley*** by Rev. P.C. Croll, D.D. **$22** (includes tax)
- ***Fragments of the Past*** by Dr. Peter G. Bertolet **$20** (includes tax)

30th Anniversary Ornament $15 (includes tax)



ITEMS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT:

- **Charming Country Crafts, Oley**
- **Evelyn & Harriette's, Pleasantville**
- **Riverview Nursery, Pricetown Road**
- **Spayd's at Green Valley Nursery, Sinking Spring**
- **Yellow House Hotel, Yellow House***
- **www.oleyvalleyheritage.com**

Please note our updated locations.

*Only sells *The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey*

Collectibles $15 (includes tax)

DeBenneville Barn

Oley Valley Inn

Hunter Bank Barn

Fisher Home

Knabb-Bieber Mill

Collectibles only available for purchase at Charming Country Crafts, Oley and on our website: www.oleyvalleyheritage.org.

Update to Article on Dairy Farmers of the Oley Valley

Many of you told us that you enjoyed reading the article in our March, 2014 newsletter entitled "Dairy Farmers of the Oley Valley." Included in that article was a list of Oley Township dairy farmers from approximately the 1940's to the 1970's. Two names were inadvertently omitted from the article, Wayne Reider and Martin R. Heffner.

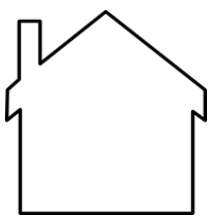
There has been another change since writing the article. Orin Moyer was the last known person to have a dairy herd on the farm owned by Vernon and Elsie Burkholder. Orin has moved his dairy herd to the Lenhartsville area. James and Tanya Howe now have the dairy herd on the Burkholder farm.

Dr. Bertolet noted in his book, *Fragments of the Past*, that there were 974 "milch" cows in Oley during the 1860 census. How many dairy cows are in the Oley Valley today? We did a survey to find:

Current Dairy Farmers	Number of Milk Cows	Number of Heifers
Steven Brubaker	65	65
Russell Guntz	50	50
Harlan and Kathryn Hoover	180	150
James and Tanya Howe	60	30
Ronald Kelcher	130	100
Steven and Pamela Miller	60	45
Edwin and Joshua Pollock	185	135
Kevin Schlegel	65	70
Dean and Brandan Wagner	200	200
Andrew and Linda Youse	45	30
TOTAL	**1,040**	**875**

The number of milk cows on the dairy farms is an estimate as the number can change daily. The 974 number in 1860 probably includes households that had one or two cows to supplement the family's food needs, and these families were not necessarily dairy farmers.

Home for OVHA



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.

OLEY FAIR

Oley Fair

For the 68th Oley Valley Community Fair, the OVHA created a booth entitled **Wild Rides of the Oley Valley** in keeping with the fair theme, **Barn To Be Wild**. Featured was a 1946 Harley Davidson motorcycle, two Oley Trolley models and many vintage photos of early modes of transportation. Many people commented on how they used to ride the Oley Trolley. Here are photos of our 2014 exhibit.

Clay Tile Display

If you happen to be at the Oley Township building, please take a look at our new display on "Clay Tiles of the Oley Valley" located in our glass cabinets in the large meeting room. The display shows the different styles of clay tiles and photos of where some of them are located in the valley. If you aren't there to attend a public meeting, just check in at the office before entering to let the secretary know you are there. Pictured below are the display cabinets.

PHOTOS

The Oley Valley Heritage Association
needs

Old Photos of the Oley Valley

from the 1950's and earlier.

**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.**

Please call one of these people if you are willing to share:
Darlene Dillon (610) 944-9503
Doug Wegman at (610) 944-8437
Doris Lorah (610) 987-6167

Memories of the Oley Valley

We're always looking for new Memories and are 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…

"After a very heavy rain drenched the first day of the Oley Fair in 1962, my sister and I talked our mother into taking us to the fair to see how many ribbons we had won. It was worth it. I won grand champion for potatoes. The man that took that entry was Robert Lesko." *Submitted by Bill Lutz.*

"In the early 1950's I remember picking asparagus behind the barn with my mother on our farm along Bull Road up at Basket." *Submitted by Bill Lutz.*

"Eating dinner on weekends at Lendacki's Oley Furnace Inn. They could really cook and the serving were large." *Submitted by Naomi Gehret.*

"Ice cutting on the Oley Furnace Mill pond. The ice house filled with ice and the saw dust that kept the ice from defrosting. The ice was stored at the end of the alley behind our house. Later ice was delivered." *Submitted by Naomi Gehret.*

"The oak ice box in the kitchen, pre-refrigerator days. You put the ice in the top and put a pan in the bottom to catch the water as it dripped down." *Submitted by Naomi Gehret.*

"My family, the Levengoods, had a couple of chicken houses. My mother would go out to the chicken houses and spend time watching the chickens to check that all the chickens were well. I could always tell what chicken house my mother was in because our dog, Shep, would always wait patiently by the door for her to come out. Shep followed my mother everywhere when she was outside." *Submitted by Mabel Yoder.*

"The first year my family, the Levengoods, planted 5 acres of tomatoes all by hand. We took a shovel, pushed it into the soil, lifted it up, put a plant in the hole, pushed the ground back, then watered it, and moved on to the next one. The second year my brother, Daniel, bought a tobacco planter. Two people could sit on it. My sister, Polly, would sit on the left side because she had no problem planting on the left. Elsie Hartman would sit on the right. They planted Rutgers and Marglobe varieties. Both are heirloom tomatoes today. *Submitted by Mabel Yoder.*

"My father, Warren Levengood, would go to Bowers and Rhoads store at the corner of Main and Water Streets in Oley to get molasses for my mother. The molasses was in a large barrel and he would take a 2-quart jar along to fill. Sometimes Elsie Hartman would ask for a ride to the store. One time she asked and he told her, 'Not tonight.' He had spilled the jar of molasses in the car, and the floor of the car was all sticky." *Submitted by Mabel Yoder.*

"Newt Geiss was not known for his driving skill and he could not back up well. He was always hitting things. When I was young, my dad and I did painting for Newt. We painted the garage doors one day and the next day we had to touch them up as he had backed up and hit the doors. He had trouble driving between the posts at the end of his driveway. He hit them as well." *Submitted by Steve Lendacki.*

"My son, Kurt, worked as a gardener for Newt. Newt would come, pick him up and take him back to his house to work. Kurt said that is how he learned to pray, that they would make it there safely. Kurt could not wait to get his driver's license so he could drive for Newt. It was safer that way." *Submitted by the late Wanda Gernert.*

"Shit on a shingle was what we called creamed dried beef." *Submitted by John Noll.*

"You made graveyard stew when someone was sick. My family made it by making toast bread. Add milk and crack an egg and put it on top of the toast. Cook in pan till the egg was done." *Submitted by Mabel Yoder.*

"Our family made graveyard stew too but a little different. We dipped bread in egg, put it in the frying pan and added some milk, cooked till warm." *Submitted by John Noll.*

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

OLEY VALLEY HERITAGE ASSOCIATION'S FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

Time to renew your membership!

OVHA Board Members:
Darlene Dillon, *President*
Steve Fisher, *Vice President*
Judith Merkel, *Secretary*
Debra Pook, *Treasurer*
Carl Brown
Lucille "Susie" Harvan
Mary Ellen Lash
Doris Lorah
Lynn Lorah
Margaret McCloskey
Eugene Richard
Richard Shaner
Kelly Spatz
Doug Wegman
Mary Williams

Newsletter Editor:
Lucille "Susie" Harvan
Phone: (610) 670-0533

Website: www.oleyvalleyheritage.org
Email: info@oleyvalleyheritage.org