Oley Valley Heritage Association

NEWSLETTER

November, 2015

The Evolution of

TRACTORS

and AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT

presented by **Donald Angstadt**

Everyone is invited!

Program is FREE.

Membership is not required but would be greatly appreciated.

Sponsored by Oley Valley Heritage Association

When:	Monday, November 16, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.
Where:	Oley Fair Centre Building 26 Jefferson Street, Oley, PA

About the speaker:

Donald Angstadt and Pikeville Equipment, Inc. can trace the family business back to 1880 when his great-grandfather, Morris Fretz, started a blacksmith shop on Oysterdale Road in Pike Township. Angstadt, a 1963 graduate of Oley Valley High School, has been employed his entire lifetime at the business he now co-owns. He is a contributor to Green Magazine and has made presentations to several John Deere Two-Cylinder Clubs at various locations. A John Deere Model B is the first tractor that Pikeville Equipment ever sold and is on display at the business with some 40 additional tractors that Donald and his son, Michael, currently own and exhibit.

Complimentary light refreshments will be provided after the program.

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

Election of Directors

In accordance with the OVHA bylaws, the annual membership meeting will be held on November 16, 2015 prior to our program. The agenda includes the election of Directors for a term of three years. Those Directors up for election include: Mary Ellen Lash, Carl Brown, Margaret McCloskey, Debra Pook, and Eugene Richard. 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 16th meeting.

New Board Member

Oliver Kindig-Stokes was approved to be a member of the Board of Directors on March 16, 2015. Oliver has lived in Oley Township his entire life and is a 2011 graduate of Oley Valley School District. He feels very strongly about preserving the culture and history of the Oley Valley.

Oliver's position on the Board was previously held by Lynn Lorah. We welcome Oliver to the Board.

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 2016 membership is paid.

What do you receive for your membership?

- Two newsletters per year mailed to your home that include OVHA news as well as interesting articles and memories of the Oley Valley.
- Two free programs per year historical in nature, the majority 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.

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. Also, please note that because our fall program and annual membership meeting are on November 16, which is the 3rd Monday of November, we will have our regularly scheduled Board meeting on Tuesday, November 10.

If you are ever in doubt about when a meeting is being held, please call Kelly Spatz at (610) 987-9278. You are always welcome to join us!

Mission Statement

The Oley Valley Heritage Association is dedicated to promoting education, publishing information and encouraging preservation of those subjects that reflect the heritage of the Oley Valley.

Textiles and Textile Tools of Oley

On April 13, 2015, Alan G. Keyser presented a program entitled "Textiles and Textile Tools of Oley." His presentation included both tools and pieces of homespun linens, linsey and wool made in the Oley area and elsewhere in southeastern Pennsylvania more than 150 years ago.

A few members also proudly showed their coverlets and other textiles made in the Oley Valley. 101 people attended the event.

Upcoming Spring Program

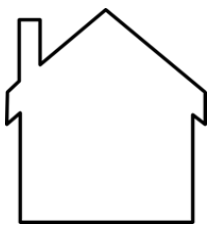
The topic of our spring program will be on the history of the Oley Fair and will be presented by Kevin Bieber. More information will be forthcoming in 2016.

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.

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.



2015 OLEY FAIR

Oley Fair

For the 69th Oley Valley Community Fair, the OVHA created a booth entitled, "**We're off to see an Oley farm"** in keeping with this year's fair theme, "**We're off to the Oley Fair!"** Featured were antique farming equipment, vintage Oley Valley farming photos and antique agricultural advertising.

Some of the antique farming equipment included: a corn sheller, ox yoke, flails, corn huskers, an early seeder, hay knife, a hog scraper, wooden forks, a wooden rake, a split oak basket and wagon jacks.

Also included were antique advertisements for threshing machines, reapers, binders, manure spreaders and early tractors.

We received many nice compliments on our booth. Here are photos of our exhibit.

Photo Identification

We need your help! Where was this photo taken? Can you identify the people in this photo? If so, please call Mary Williams at (610) 987-3179.

Sacred Oak

At the regularly scheduled meeting on July 20, 2015, our President, Kelly Spatz, informed the Board that the historic Sacred Oak tree is in need of help. The yellow oak tree, over 500 years old, was worshipped by Native Americans of the Oley Valley and was cherished by Oley pioneers.

Barlett Tree Experts of Chester County, a historic tree expert, was contacted by the Oley Township Supervisors and reported that the tree is not receiving sufficient nourishment from the land. Barlett reported that root invigoration is the most important step in helping the tree. Also recommended was the installation of a cable to support a limb, a lightening protection system, and removal of dead branches. The cost for this project would be nearly $10,000.

Since the tree is located on privately owned land, the Oley Township Supervisors do not consider it appropriate spending taxpayer dollars to fund it. However, they have set up a fund for donations. Bartlett has offered to donate all the labor, a considerable donation. That leaves $2,535 as a balance that the community would have to cover.

Having heard the issue, a motion was made and the OVHA Board approved donating $1,000 to Help The Sacred Oak project. The Sacred Oak is one of the Oley Valley's treasures, and we would like it to survive for many more years.

If you would also like to donate to this cause, please send your donation payable to Oley Township with Sacred Oak Project written on the memo line of your check. Mail your check to the Oley Township Municipal Building, 1 Rose Virginia Road, Oley, PA 19547.

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…

"I went with my grandfather and two horses to the blacksmith shop at the end of Blacksmith Road (no name back then) near the Fisher house. My grandfather walked and I rode one of the horses part of the time. Both horses got new shoes." *Submitted by Darlene Dillon.*

"My brother and cousins went fishing in the creek at Limekiln behind the Hetrick farm. We caught sunfish and catfish. My grandfather would go along sometimes. One time he took a big round fishing net with lead weights around the outside. He netted a big gold fish about eight inches long. We took it home and put it in my uncle's water trough that had running water going through it at his barn. The fish lived a few years." *Submitted by Darlene Dillon.*

"When I was a teenager, I would ride my bicycle to the Oley Furnace Inn. In Lendacki's store, you had to climb two steps to get into John Lendacki's freezer where he kept the ice cream. John would scoop and scoop until you got 3 big scoops of Aristocrat ice cream on a cone." *Submitted by Sarah Bieber Houck.*

"I helped the Levengoods pick tomatoes when I was a teenager. I remember being given a peach basket that I hauled up the row until it was full. When it was full, you put a tag on it. At the end of the day you were paid based on the number of baskets with your tag. I remember Julie Levengood (that would be "Butch" Daniel Levengood Sr.'s wife) was really fast at picking tomatoes." *Submitted by Sarah Bieber Houck.*

"Dick Muntz would stack the baskets on a flatbed truck. Each row got narrower and at the top, they tilted in. Then he would leave in the middle of the night to take the tomatoes to the Campbell's Soup plant." *Submitted by Sarah Bieber Houck.*

"I remember being in a class at Oley High School in November, 1963. Robert Lesko was the teacher when an announcement came over the intercom that President Kennedy had been shot. Then the radio broadcast went on that he had died. It was a very sad part of history that we had lived that day." *Submitted by Bill Lutz.*

"When the Italian hoagies were served at lunch in grade school, they were made with Velveeta cheese." *Submitted by Steve Lendacki.*

Stories of Oley Valley Memories

Some of our members were kind enough to send us some short stories of their memories. We are always grateful to share these with our members. Below is our second short story from Mildred Fisher Reber and our first from Anna Mae Romig Wolfe.

Oley Valley Memories

by Mildred Fisher Reber

My very earliest memory of the Oley area was the summer/fall of 1946. The home we lived in was on Route 73 about halfway between the town of Oley and Pikeville. My father was the hired hand for Walter Copley, who owned and operated a drug farm. No, not cocaine, marijuana or any other illegal drugs. The farm grew crops for pharmaceutical companies to use in prescription drugs such as belladonna and digitalis which were used to treat heart problems.

Sometimes it seems hard to explain why you remember and retain certain events that remain cemented in your mind. My memories are not necessarily the same as my siblings' memories and vice versa. We each have our own separate and outstanding events that have captured a place in our minds and hearts.

When I, as an adult, would discuss my memories with my mother, she was astonished at the details I had retained. It would be necessary for me to mention the fact that I was only about 3-1/2 years old at this time. I can picture the layout of the interior of the house, furniture pieces, rooms, and door locations in our tenant house on the Copley farm.

The outside of the property was the fun area. We had lots of places to play; a stream to explore and wet our feet, a spacious yard, a large covered porch, pavements to ride toys onto, and fields filled with blue bells, or as some people refer to as grape hyacinths. I have loved blue bells forever because of this memory and have planted some on my property to remind me of their beauty in mass as they were on the Oley farm.

It was on this farm, in this house, that an event occurred which brought great joy to our family. Up to this point in time, we were a family; Mom, Dad and three small daughters ages five, three and one years old. Mom was upstairs in bed and expecting child number four. As we girls played outside, a man carrying a black bag approached our porch. He was Dr. Mark Grim, an Oley family physician, who was arriving to help deliver our baby. I did not believe the baby was in the little black bag, as some parents would tell children in those days. However, I knew this man was going to give us a baby. Yes, finally, we had a baby brother. Dr. Grim had delivered three children for my parents. He was one of the family to us.

With a family this size to feed and support, entertainment came in the form of casual drives. My father often commented on the rich soil in the Oley Valley every time we would drive past a freshly plowed field. He had farming in his blood. Shortly after my brother's birth, my parents were able to purchase a farm of their own, but not in the Oley area. However, my parents' ties to the Oley area were always strong. I suppose, maybe by osmosis, those ties and memories infiltrated my life also.

Memories of the Vendors in Oley

by Anna Mae Romig Wolfe

I lived in a little rented house in "Suffolk" on Main Street in Oley, north of the center of town, back in the '40s and '50s. The house was one of five in a row reportedly once owned by a woman in Reading whose last name was Suffolk; hence the name Suffolk as told to me by James Bower, Justice of the Peace and printer in Oley.

My mom Eva Romig was a stay-at-home Mom who didn't drive. On Saturdays she would hand a store list for the week to my Dad, Kermit Romig, who would go to Hiester's General Store straight down the road in "downtown" Oley at Water Street. The store also served as our post office for awhile. The building is now the home of Josh and Kelly Williamson.

That took care of the groceries, but there were vendors who came to the door on a regular basis with their specific wares. There was the Watkins man, Howard Manwiller, who sold cleaning products and more. He would entertain us kids with sound effects as he scratched through his leather pouch to make change. There was the Fuller Brush man with brushes, a huckster with fruits and vegetables, the milkman, the butcher, the baker, a rag man and the fish man, to name a few.

The butcher from Conrad's Butcher Shop in Oley came on Saturday mornings. Mom would go out to the truck, step inside, and buy a week's supply of meat. She would pick out a roast, maybe a chicken, and the butcher would cut it to order.

Memories of the Vendors Continued on Page 8

Then there was Mr. Hohl the delivery man from Shofer's Bakery in Reading. He would bring a tray of goodies to the door. Mom would usually pick bread and delicious cinnamon twists with thick white icing. A special service Mr. Hohl performed, as did the milkman, came when I was bedridden with scarlet fever and the house was quarantined for at least three weeks. He would leave loaves of bread on the front porch. Mom would retrieve them after he pulled away.

The oddest vendor, I thought, was the fish man. I just didn't think there was a need for a fish man in Oley but I was wrong. My dad and neighbor Wayne Lorah, the rural mailman, had a need for two snapper turtles. Wayne had a workshop in a little barn behind his house with a black potbellied stove for warmth and, occasionally, cooking. On this occasion, they were going to make snapper soup.

When the fish man delivered the snappers, they were alive and nasty! Their bodies were about 12 inches in diameter, legs flailing, mouths open. One at a time, they were wrestled out of an inverted bushel basket and onto a log. One of the men took a stick and teased the angry snapper until it clamped onto the stick with its sharp teeth and wouldn't let go. Slowly the stick was pulled, stretching its neck as far as it would go. At that point, the other man came down on it with a hatchet and, voila, snapper soup.

And now the only vendors coming to the house are the newspaper man in the middle of the night or UPS, Fed-Ex, mail truck drivers, all dropping their goods and speeding off, no contact, no names, no memories.

Interested in giving OVHA collectibles as a Christmas gifts?
Collectibles $15 (includes tax)

DeBenneville Barn

Oley Valley Inn

Hunter Bank Barn

Fisher Home

Knabb-Bieber Mill

Collectibles only available for purchase on our website: www.oleyvalleyheritage.org.

P H O T O S

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:
Doug Wegman at (610) 944-8437
Doris Lorah (610) 987-6167
Darlene Dillon (610) 944-9503

Morels

In our spring 2015 newsletter we had an article on morels that people found in the Oley Valley. We received an email from Rosemarie Hantwerker about this article. Here it is.

"My husband and I live on Mt. Mary Road in Pikeville. I read the article on morels in your latest newsletter. I've been picking wild mushrooms since I was a child. There are 6 edible and safe mushrooms to eat in Pennsylvania. On our property, we have 5 of them but not the morels. They are only available for a short few weeks in the spring. If you go mushrooming, the only tip you need to know is "when in doubt, throw it out!!!"

There are false morels along with edible ones, the easiest ways to tell if it's edible is to cut the morels in half vertically. Safe-to-eat morels are hollow inside. BUT false and dangerous to eat morels have either solid insides or cottony material inside its stem and cap. All edible morels stems should be directly connected to their cap. All safe morels have a cap with pits and ridges, NOT folds and creases. If in doubt, throw it out.

Some people get sick from eating mushrooms. It's not that they are poisonous, but that the person is allergic to the mushrooms. So be careful. Also we can pick shaggy mane mushrooms on our back property. Some people like them to be big but my dad and grandmother taught me how to pick them when they are hard and small and just peeking out of the ground. We called them traffles, not truffles, but traffles. The smell and taste of them when picked small is out of this world, so woodsy and so earth like, but they only grow in late September into early October. But they are soooo good. You should never eat any of these shaggy manes with alcohol because there are two types of shaggys, one is fine and the other reacts with alcohol. You won't die, but you will get very sick.

If you want to start mushrooming, there's a great book out there with loads of pictures and instructions and check lists for picking edible mushrooms. It's called *Start Mushrooming* by Stan Tekiela and Karen Shanberg. You might be surprised that those large white balls, called giant puff balls, are great to eat. As kids we used to just kick them. Most safe mushrooms can be dried or frozen for later use.

As I said, there are 6 safe wild mushrooms to eat in Pennsylvania. Morels are the best of the 6 to eat, and no morel pickers will ever tell you where they found a great crop of them. Mushroom pickers are very secretive about the locations of mushrooms."

Remember, if in doubt, throw it out!
Never eat a mushroom if you are unsure of the type!

Landmarks Brochure - Coming Soon!

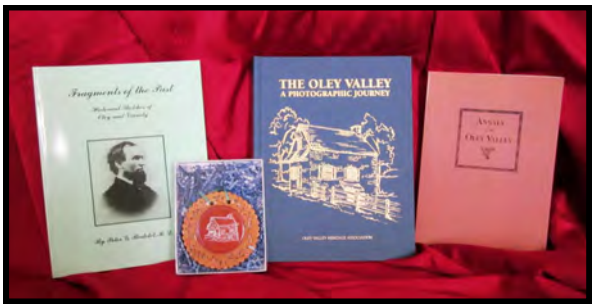
For many years, Oley Valley Heritage Association handed out free brochures entitled Landmarks of the Historic Oley Valley. This brochure included black and white photos of landmarks of the Oley Valley. Everyone loved this brochure so much that we ran out of our supply!

We have been working on a new brochure. This one will include lots of color photos. Maybe your property will be featured. This is just one way that our organization promotes the heritage of the Oley Valley.

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

Fall 2015
Newsletter

Give the gift of Oley Valley History for Christmas!



Fragments of the Past by Dr. Peter G. Bertolet $20
30th Anniversary Ornament $15
The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey $35
Annals of the Oley Valley by Rev. P. C. Croll, D.D. $22

Above Items Available At:

- **Evelyn & Harriette's**
  1232 Oysterdale Road, Oley, PA
  Phone (610) 987-6055
- **Ladyfingers Sewing Studio**
  6375 Oley Turnpike Road, Oley, PA
  Phone: (610) 689-0068
- **Riverview Nursery**
  3049 Pricetown Road, Temple, PA
  Phone: (610) 929-5049
- **Spayd's at Green Valley Nursery**
  4610 Penn Avenue, Sinking Spring, PA
  Phone: (610) 678-6711
- **Yellow House Hotel***
  6743 Boyertown Pike, Douglassville, PA
  (610) 689-9410
  *Only sells *The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey*
- **www.oleyvalleyheritage.org**

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