

# Oley Valley Heritage Association

## NEWSLETTER



Fall, 2016

### Oley Valley GRAVEYARD RAMBLINGS— THEN AND NOW *presented by* Laurel Miller

*Sponsored by Oley Valley Heritage Association*



*DeTurk Cemetery*

*Join us as we learn about*  
**OLEY'S FAMILY  
CEMETERIES,**  
the people buried there,  
how to read old tombstones,  
and the meaning of  
tombstone art from  
different eras

**When:** Monday, November 14, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.  
**Where:** Oley Fair Centre Building  
26 Jefferson Street, Oley, PA

#### *About the Speaker:*

Laurel Miller, a Berks County native, extensively studied and researched Oley's family cemeteries for approximately 10 years. With this research, she, Mary Ellen Lash, and Kathleen Lorah published a book entitled "A Genealogical Guide to Berks County Private Cemeteries" in 1992. She was the first vice president of the Berks County Association for Graveyard Preservation, served on the Oley Valley Heritage Association board in its early years, was an archivist for the Berks County Register of Wills Office, is fluent in old German script, and has enjoyed genealogy since her teenage years. For the last 18 years, she has been doing missionary work in Africa.

Everyone is invited to attend this FREE event!  
No membership required but would be greatly appreciated!  
*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 14, 2016 prior to our program. The agenda includes the election of Directors for a term of three years. Those Directors up for election include: Lynne Seidel, Darlene Dillon, Kelly Spatz, and Lucille "Susie" Harvan. 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 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **New Board Member**

Lynne Seidel was approved to be a member of the Board of Directors on March 21, 2016. Lynne lives in the Oley Valley, is a 1964 graduate of Oley Valley High School, is a 1967 graduate of Pottstown Memorial Hospital School of Nursing, and was a registered nurse for 40 years. Her hobbies include genealogy and creating family history books on family lines. She also plays the organ for her church on Sundays.

Lynne's position on the Board was previously held by Oliver Kindig-Stokes. We welcome Lynne to the Board.

## **WANTED: SECRETARY**

Our long-time secretary, Judi Merkel, is retiring from the position of secretary effective December 31, 2016. We thank Judi for her many years of faithful service as she was an excellent secretary. Judi plans to remain an active member of our organization.

Because of her retirement, we are in need of someone to fill the position of Secretary as well as fill a seat on the OVHA Board. If you are interested in serving in this position on the Board, please contact Kelly Spatz at (610) 987-9278.

## **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 2017 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](http://www.oleyvalleyheritage.org).

## **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.



**Phoebe Hopkins**

March 5, 1929—May 12, 2016

### In Remembrance

Our Valley lost a very special lady this past May with the passing of Phoebe Bertolet Hopkins, a charter member of OVHA. A descendent of the early Bertolet settlers, she moved to the Oley Valley with her husband, Lloyd Hopkins, and became a tireless worker to help preserve the historic integrity of the Oley Valley. Her efforts contributed to the listing of Oley Township on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Our organization is grateful to her family and friends for contributions made in her memory to our Association.

### Oley Valley Community Fair Association, 70 Years of Progress



On Monday, April 18, 2016, Kevin D. Bieber and Dena L. Kauffman presented a program on the history of the Oley Fair. Approximately 112 people attended.

Bieber and Kauffman explained how the fair originated and traced its history from 1946 to the present time. Early photos of the fair were also shared when the fair was held at what is now the Oley Administration Building on the Oley school grounds and later as it was held on the Oley Fairgrounds. What wonderful memories it brought back of previous Oley Fairs!





## 2016 OLEY FAIR



For the 70th Oley Valley Community Fair, the OVHA created a booth entitled, “A Fair to Remember” in keeping with this year’s fair theme of the same title. Our booth featured Oley Fair memorabilia and vintage photos taken at the school grounds where it originated in 1946 and later on the Oley Fairgrounds. Also included was an enlarged print of the Landmarks of the Historic Oley Valley brochure and some vintage aerial photos of the school and fairgrounds area. Our booth won first place for Outstanding Indoor Commercial Exhibit. Congratulations to those who served on this committee for their hard work and innovative ideas for the booth!



## Celebrity Event at the 2016 Oley Fair



Our President, Kelly Spatz, was invited to participate in the Celebrity Event. Contestants were to present a heifer by parading it around under a tent. For those raised on a farm, this task would be easy. However, Kelly has never even touched a cow let alone led one around. She was lucky to have one that was very mellow and easy to lead. Congratulations to Kelly for a job well done!



### 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 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!

### Home for OVHA

Good news! The Oley Valley School District has allowed us the use of a vacant room in the high school. The OVHA sends a big “thank you” to the school administration for making this possible!

However, we are still interested in finding a permanent home for our organization. Why do we want a home? Currently, we have our Board meetings at the Oley Township Municipal Building. 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. If you have any suggestions, please let a board member know.



### Landmarks Brochure

In our last newsletter you received our new Landmarks of the Historic Oley Valley brochure that includes 32 colorful photos and a map to locate each one of them. If you’d like to share this brochure with friends or family, you can pick up a brochure at the Oley Post Office, the Oley Township building and at any of the businesses that sell our books. Please see business locations on page 8. We also will mail a brochure to you. Just send an email to [info@oleyvalleyheritage.org](mailto:info@oleyvalleyheritage.org). Feel free to share the historic beauty of the Oley Valley!



### 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.

## Memories of the Oley Valley

As you can see, this newsletter does not include any short Memories of the Oley Valley. Why? None were submitted. We're always looking for Memories and are interested in nostalgia or memories of out-of-date practices (those things typically not done today). If you would like to see these Memories in future newsletters, we need your help! Please email or write to us and include your phone number in case we have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

## Stories of Oley Valley Memories

Below is our fourth short story from Mildred Fisher Reber. We are always grateful to receive these memories from our members.

### Oley Valley Memories

by Mildred A. Reber written on July 15, 2015

Oley Fair this past year, 2014, had absolutely perfect weather and proved to be most successful and well attended.

Throughout my childhood, my family attended the fair every year. However, the temperature was so cold one year that we wore our winter coats, gloves, hats, and scarves and still we were freezing. One year it rained so much prior to the fair, that our vehicle was bogged down in the grass parking area causing great concern as to whether we would ever get out. With mud flying in every direction, we finally got on our way. I remember years of such hot and sticky conditions causing us to compete with loads of bees hanging around the trash barrels.

Tractors and huge pieces of farm equipment were displayed throughout the fairgrounds. Interesting demonstrations of chainsaw usage. Free yardsticks, which are hard to come by these days. Pamphlets and literature from all sorts of businesses. Animals of all variations, each one a well-groomed pet of someone who was hoping to win a blue ribbon.

We, like many others, looked forward to Oley Fair's well-known and loved french fries. Lines so long there often was a bit of a wait to get your serving of the treat.

There were no girly shows or less than honest games of chance that were impossible to win. Yes, the Oley Fair was a good old-fashioned, bring the whole family to enjoy fair. It still is today. Look at the attendance and you can see it is exactly what the public continues to want.



Front row (left to right):  
Mary Williams, Lynne Seidel, Kelly Spatz, Darlene Dillon, Richard Shaner.

Back Row (left to right):  
Doug Wegman, Lucille "Susie" Harvan, Margaret McCloskey, Eugene Richard, Doris Lorah, Steve Fisher.

Missing from photo:  
Judith Merkel who served as our photographer, Debra Pook, Carl Brown, Mary Ellen Lash.

Oley Valley Heritage Association Board of Directors September 19, 2016.

## The History of 'APRONS'

*Originally written in different form by Tina Trivett. This version author unknown.*

I don't think our kids know what an apron is. The principle use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.



It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

REMEMBER: Grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw.

### A Request from OVHA

Are you interested in a second volume to *The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey*? If so, we need your help! Our photo book is only made possible by receiving vintage photos from you and the public. In order for us to even begin working on a second book, we need more photos! We are interested in photos of buildings, places, events, parades, etc. rather than portraits. Because we are having difficulty obtaining photos from the 1950s era and earlier, we are now asking for photos from the **early 1970s era and earlier**. These photos should be from Oley Township, Ruscombmanor Township, Alsace Township or Pike Township. We will scan your photos and return them to you. If you have previously given us your name and phone number and no one ever contacted you, we apologize for the error and ask you to please call one of the following people again.

**Doug Wegman (610) 944-8437**

**Doris Lorah (610) 987-6167**

**Darlene Dillon (610) 944-9503**

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



**Fall 2016  
Newsletter**

***Give the gift  
Of Oley Valley  
History for  
Christmas!***



***The Oley Valley: A Photographic Journey* \$35  
*Fragments of the Past* by Dr. Peter G. Bertolet \$20  
*Annals of the Oley Valley* by Rev. P. C. Croll, D.D. \$22  
*Oley Township Consolidated Schools Dedication Program of Nov. 15, 1930* \$5  
*30th Anniversary Ornament* \$15**

**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](http://www.oleyvalleyheritage.org)**

**OVHA Board Members:**

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

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