

# Oley Valley Heritage Association

## NEWSLETTER

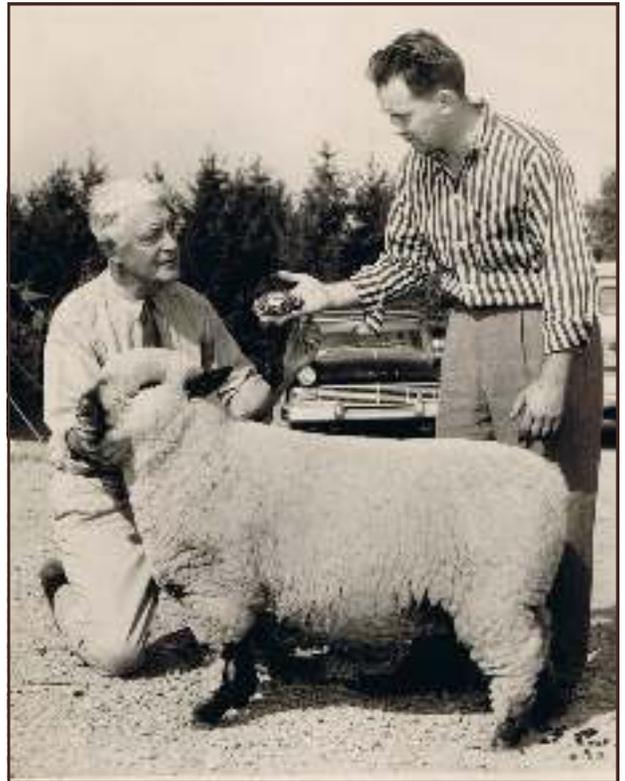


April, 2016

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



*Presented by*  
**Kevin D. Bieber**  
and  
**Dena L. Kauffman**  
current President and current Treasurer respectively



*Sponsored by Oley Valley Heritage Association*

**MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2016 at 7:00 PM**

Oley Fair Centre Building  
26 Jefferson Street, Oley, PA

Everyone is invited!  
Program is FREE!

Please join us as we learn  
about the history of the  
Oley Fair!

Membership is not  
required but would be  
greatly appreciated.

Complimentary light refreshments will be provided after the program.



**Oliver J. Kindig-Stokes**  
April 27, 1993 - October 18, 2015

### **In Remembrance**

*It is with deep sadness that we report the death of one of our board members. Oliver was a wonderful young man, deeply invested and passionate about the Oley Valley's architecture and history. He was working to restore a family farm as well as conducting his own research on bake ovens. It was a pleasure to serve with him and he is greatly missed.*

### **Membership**

If you received this newsletter, you are a 2016 member of the Oley Valley Heritage Association or are an organization that supports our cause. Thank you for being a member! If you know of someone who'd like to join, please let us know and a membership form will be mailed to them.

### **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 spring program will be on April 18, which is the 3rd Monday of April, we will have our regularly scheduled Board meeting on Tuesday, April 12.

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!

### **Landmarks Brochure**

Enclosed is the new Landmarks of the Historic Oley Valley brochure! It includes 32 colorful photos. This brochure took several years to produce as we tried to include the oldest and/or most historically significant properties of the Oley Valley. Perhaps your property is featured.

This is just one way that our organization promotes the heritage of the Oley Valley.

Let us know how you like it!



### **Abraham Bertolet Farm Journal**

The Oley Township Supervisors purchased a rare piece of Oley Valley history, the Abraham Bertolet Farm Journal that dates back to the early 1700s. This journal, written completely in original German script, contains journal entries documenting most of the early families who settled in the Oley Valley. It is possibly the earliest farm journal known to exist in Pennsylvania. To find such a wonderful piece of history is a treasure!

The Supervisors contacted OVHA and requested our help. The journal needs to be transcribed into printed German and subsequently translated into English with the end result being a book that could be shared with the public for purchase. Because the book is so fragile, we will contact professional historians for their advice on how to go about this enormous project that we suspect will take many years to complete. Please look for further updates in future newsletters.

Since there will be an expense involved in the translation, the Oley Township Supervisors have created a fund for anyone wishing to donate to this cause. Please make checks payable to Oley Township, include AB Ledger in the memo section of the check, and mail to Oley Township, P O Box 19, Oley, PA 19547.



## The Evolution of Tractors and Agricultural Equipment program

On November 16, 2015 Donald Angstadt presented a program on “The Evolution of Tractors and Agricultural Equipment.” 160 people attended the event. For those who grew up with tractors, his presentation re-lived old memories. For those who did not, his presentation transported us back in time to when those tractors were used.



### 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 called you, we apologize for the error and ask you to please call one of the following people again.

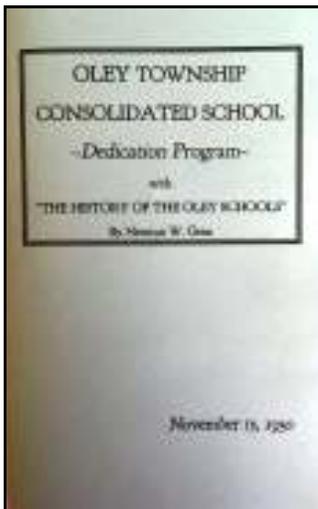
**Doug Wegman (610) 944-8437**

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

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

### New Item For Sale!

#### **“Oley Township Consolidated School Dedication Program of November 15, 1930”**



For those interested in the history of the Oley Schools, OVHA reprinted the 1930 dedication program. This program was originally for the dedication of the school on Jefferson Street in Oley that now serves as the Oley Valley School District Administration Building. Included in the 52-page program are an article entitled “The History of the Oley Schools” written by Newton W. Geiss, an article entitled “The Consolidation of Oley Township” written by F. H. Stauffer, many details on the building’s construction, a listing of staff, some photos, and many interesting ads from businesses in the area. The program is interesting to read and will provide a lot of information for those doing research.

The purchase price is \$5. We will have the booklet on display and will be for sale at our upcoming program and any events we will attend. After that, we may have them for sale at our participating businesses. Look for information in our fall newsletter or on our website.

## Display Cases at Oley Township Municipal Building



Did you see our booth at the Oley Valley Community Fair in 2015? If not, you can see part of it on display at the Oley Township Municipal Building. It's a wonderful display of vintage farming photos and antique agricultural advertising.

### A Message About OVHA

One of our tasks that OVHA has taken on is to interview people from the area who have lived in the Oley Valley for many years. We ask them questions and videotape their answers. Here is an article written by Judith Merkel that was shared at our January 18th board meeting. It relates to this and other ways we document previous life in the Oley Valley.

### Why Do Archives Matter?

At our Board meeting on November, 2015, one of our Board members remarked, "Why do we do this if it is never seen?" regarding the interviews of our older Oley Valley citizens. This comment made me think that maybe not all of us understand our purpose.

Why do we collect old photographs? Of course, the plans are to someday publish another book. There is really no guarantee that this will happen.

As luck would have it in the fall, 2015 issue of the Historical Review of Berks County, Kimberly Brown, Director of Special Collections and Archives of the Berks History Center, published an article on exactly this subject. In her article she states, "I've also met my fair share of historians and researchers who have spent years digging up documents trying to absorb as much as they can about a person, event or building and who want to share and engage people in conversation. History is more than genealogy, the collection of names and dates. It is the study of how people lived and interacted with each other, their surroundings and events."

These verbal/visual records that OVHA has been doing for several years started, I believe, by former OVHA President Bob Lesko furnishes valuable insight into how our residents of the Oley Valley lived and interacted with each other, their surroundings and events. It is perhaps our modern day version of "Fragments of the Past." Also, with the addition of our photographic archives, we are preserving a look back into what has gone before in the Oley Valley for those who come after us. Who knows when they may be seen? We, as a Board, spoke of making a program sometime of some of this archival material.

Just keep in mind that *God Bless America* was written by Irving Berlin in 1917, 22 years before it was introduced to the public by Kate Smith. He actually had to change a few words in the lyrics to "update" the song.

## 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...**

"It has been 50 years now since I had a most unusual birthday. I was living in Mt. Penn at the time and a small family party was planned that evening. My mother arrived from her home in the Oley Valley bearing a store bought cake. What!? Why? My mother was an excellent cake baker. Well, the story she told was almost unbelievable. She had baked a cake but then apparently a skunk had been hit by a car and managed to crawl into one of the recessed basement window wells in her house. She made several phone calls finally managing to get someone there to remove the skunk but in the meantime the house reeked of that unique smell. She told us that it had even been absorbed into the cake she had baked . . . particularly the icing . . . just enough to spoil it. Don't ask me how she got the skunky perfume out of her clothes and furniture. I really don't remember but I sometimes, when smelling that unique odor, smile at that particular memory." *Submitted by Judith Merkel.*

"My elementary class enjoyed playing in the wooded area at the edge of the playground. After a majority of us caught poison ivy, we were forbidden to play there. My poison was so severe that my mother and I made a visit to Dr. Grim." *Submitted by Mary Williams.*

"On New Year's Day the Oley Valley High School Band played at various hotels in our school district. A school bus transported us from one community hotel to another. We would play outside the hotel until we were invited in to the hotel. Many times we were served soda. I remember playing when it was very cold. Principal Frederick Stauffer would accompany the band." *Submitted by Mary Williams.*

"A recent article in the *Lancaster Farming* newspaper reminded me of several memories while growing up on a dairy farm in Oley. Sue Bowman wrote that Mondays were always "wash day" and that the laundry was washed in a little wooden structure on the farm that was called the "wash house." A small shed, built over an arch (cave for storing vegetables) and located next to a water cistern, served as our wash house. It also served as our butcher house. There was no automatic washing machine or dryer. We had an agitator wringer washer and two wash tubs which were filled with cold water to rinse the laundry. We had running water in the wash house, but no hot water. Water was heated in an iron kettle, and I found it challenging to build the fire. The white load was always laundered first in hot water; the dirty overalls last. When the laundry was clean, it was fed through the wringer one piece at a time. The laundry would drop into the first tub of cold water and the same process was repeated until the laundry fell into the wash basket. A second load was placed in the washing machine, and hot water was added as needed. Even on the coldest day the wash (we never called it laundry) was usually hung on an outside wash line. When we had deep snows or extreme cold, the laundry was hung on a line in the cellar (basement). If we had a rainy day in summer, wash day was reluctantly postponed to a "better wash day." *Submitted by Mary Williams.*

"I remember when there were two Reading newspapers. The Reading Times was delivered in the morning and the Reading Eagle was delivered in the evening." *Submitted by Lucille "Susie" Harvan.*

"I grew up in Oley in the 50s and 60s and remember when everyone wore their Sunday best to church. Men wore suits. Women wore hats and sometimes white gloves. It was a tradition to wear your best clothes to church as a way to honor God." *Submitted by Lucille "Susie" Harvan.*

## **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 receive them and share them with our members. Below is our third short story from Mildred Fisher Reber and our first from Sara (Bieber) Houck. Enjoy reading!

### **Oley Valley Memories** by Mildred Fisher Reber

When speaking of Oley Valley memories, a very important one comes to my mind. It was the times I spent visiting my grandparents. They lived at Yellow House and were the owners and operators of “Fisher’s Butcher Shop.”

So what would be so great about visiting a butcher shop? It certainly was not to watch any gruesome details of the butchering process. That wasn’t where my attention and interests were focused. Things happened at grandmom and grandpop’s house that did not have happen at my house.

Yes, we had an outside toilet almost like theirs, but their outhouse was supplied with much more interesting accessories. Their toilet had a half moon carved in the side. A bit more classy! Theirs was supplied with the Sears, Roebuck, and Co. catalogs. You were able to research what was available for you to purchase. You could dream about what you wanted, select what you liked, and contemplate purchasing all in one sitting. All this while still carrying on your business at hand. Tear out of the catalog whatever page you liked or didn’t like and use as necessary. What a feature!

While visiting my grandparents, I was always treated to grandpop’s delicious homemade ring baloney. Of course, to go with the ring baloney I needed something to drink. This was the only place I could get not only homemade ring baloney but also my very own bottle of 7up soda. Soda was a treat I only had at my grandparents. My parents never bought soda at our house. They were probably very wise for that decision.

If we visited my grandparents toward the later afternoon or the early evening, we would all crowd into their small living room to witness a new device that was on the market, one we did not have at our house. It was one of the very first television sets on the market. A huge, clumsy box with a screen that seemed to be only about six to eight inches in size. Black and white picture, but what a marvelous invention. I believe we watched shows such as “Amos and Andy.” But then, I don’t remember the shows as much as the fact we seemed to be sitting with our noses so close to the screen. Grandpop in his recliner overseeing all the excitement and so proud of the joy his TV gave us.

Grandmom was, as most grandmoms are, interested in what treat we wanted from her well-stocked kitchen. We were always treated as special guests. Her main desire was to please us. No matter how large or small her effort, we always loved her for it.

I realized as years passed that whatever little you may do in someone’s life to create a memory it will be cherished if it was done with love, the kind of special love that grandparents can give to their grandchildren. Sometimes, I have to laugh at the silliness of some of these memories, however, I feel very blessed to have them.

### **OVHA Storage**

In previous newsletters, we have asked for suggestions for a home for us. It is now more of a priority for OVHA to find a suitable place for storage. Do you have a place that you could donate to OVHA to use for storage? We are looking for a secure clean, dry, heated, easily-accessible room to store our books, filing cabinets, artifacts, etc. If you are willing to donate storage for our use, please call Kelly Spatz at (610) 987-9278.

**My Fondest Oley Valley Memories**

by Sara (Bieber) Houck

Some of my fondest memories of the good old days was when my dad had bought a second-hand bicycle for me. It needed tender loving care so I painted it. I was so proud of it and decided to take it for a spin. I wasn't too experienced at riding as a young teen but on a hot Sunday afternoon I began on Furnace Road and wound up at Lendacki's Tavern. To my surprise, they were open. Mr. John Lendacki said, "May I help you?" I suppose he thought I had problems with the bicycle. Instead he dipped me the largest and best cone of ice cream I have ever enjoyed and eaten in my 80+ years. What a treat!!!

Another memorable moment when I was a youngster was when my dad was plowing with a single plow and a mule. Evidently a car backfired or another loud noise scared the mule. It took off like a streak of lightening with the plow behind it and continued over our property and on Main Street in Oley. Going north the sparks flew when the plow contacted the road. Being kids we thought it was hilarious but dad was furious. Luckily, it was cornered in the barnyard of the Levengood farm. It could have been worse if a car would have been involved but we all had a good laugh.

Another remembrance was when my uncle Stanley would come to our place to hunt big fat white stump worms to go fishing. He told me to hold the can while he caught them and put them in the can. I was scared to death to watch them wiggle up the inside of the can to get out. It was not my favorite entertainment.

My parents grew strawberries to sell. Mother and dad would pick them while I sat on the front porch of our home and waited for a car to stop as a potential buyer. At that time they were 50 cents to 75 cents a box. We never had enough but I enjoyed the experience and for that I am thankful.

**My Garden Memory**

by Lucille "Susie" Harvan



In light of the fact that spring will soon be on its way, I thought I'd share a memory of mine. Here is a photo on the left of a fern peony from my garden. This plant was handed down from generation to generation in the DeTurck family of Oley. I am a direct descendent. Many people have never seen a peony like this. It is quite unusual. To the right is a closeup photo. Notice how fine the leaves are. My family, particularly my mother, Evelyn (DeTurck) Moyer, treasured this plant. That is why every spring when it blooms I always think of her. Pieces of this plant have been transplanted wherever we have lived. You will also find this plant in several gardens in the Oley Valley.



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**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 and look forward to your comments.

**Mission Statement**

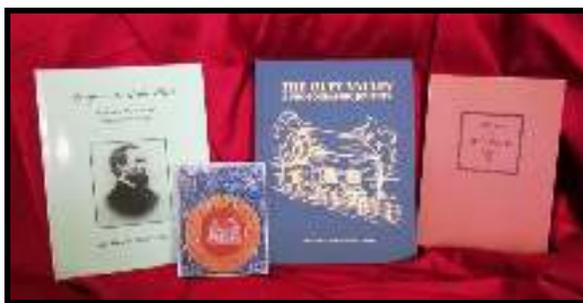
The Oley Valley Heritage Association is dedicated to promoting education, publishing information and encouraging preservation of those subjects that reflect the heritage of the Oley Valley.

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



Spring 2016  
Newsletter

## Oley Valley Heritage Association Items For Sale



*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](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  
Richard Shaner  
Doug Wegman  
Mary Williams

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