

*1st name used in the previous two issues.
Hope we can see you soon. Spence
2-6-8*

Overholser Family Association



Bulletin

Published semiannually by the Overholser Family Association

FEBRUARY 1980

VOLUME II NUMBER 1

THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

With this issue, the Overholser Family Association is entering the second year of publication of this Bulletin. A number of favorable comments have been received regarding this Bulletin, so the Association, at the reunion last August, authorized that the publication be continued under the present format. Until something arises to change matters, it will be published on a semiannual basis, i.e., February and August, and will be financed by voluntary contributions.

With several new people attending the reunion in 1979 and several more attending who have not attended for many years, I am encouraged with the future prospects of our reunions. If anyone has suggestions to help make the reunions more interesting, he should send his suggestions to your president.

Special mention should be made of the fact that Esta Buch Herr and Harold Barr were elected Honorary Vice Presidents. It is extremely rare that one person would attend nearly all of the reunions throughout a long lifetime and in addition would take an active part as officer and/or committee chairman: this is the combination that we find in both Esta and Harold. By the best information which could be gathered, it appears that neither one has missed more than three since the first reunion in 1906. CONGRATULATIONS ESTA AND HAROLD!

MINUTES OF 3RD ANNUAL REUNION

"The third annual Overholser Reunion took place on the 30th day of July 1908, in the delightful grove on the estate of S. O. Frantz near Rohers-town. The number of persons present exceeded previous record, being 176.

"The day was spent in social converse, singing and literary exercises and a brief business session. Mr. H.H. Kinzer delivered a[n] historical address.

"A resolution was adopted providing that hereafter the Reunion be held on the last Thursday in August of each year.

"A resolution was adopted heartily thanking Mr. and Mrs. S.O. Frantz for their kindness in providing the place for the reunion as well as doing so much in many other ways to make the affair a success.

"Mr. Martin L. Overholser was re-elected President and Mr. Chas. Overholser Secretary, Mr. J.L.W. Weiler, Treasurer."

(The above minutes were accompanied by a listing of 169 names, including addresses.)

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Overholser 74th Reunion
Saturday, August 23, 1980
Terre Hill Memorial Park
Terre Hill, Pa.

OVERHOLSER FAMILY ASSOCIATION
BULLETIN

Volume II - Number 1

Editor - J. Spencer Overholser
Typist - Carolyn Oswald Kendall

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Family Association, P.O. Box 106,
Oley, Pennsylvania 19547

This Bulletin is financed by vol-
untary contributions. Send con-
tributions to the association
treasurer: Mrs. Marjorie Carroll,
319 Monroe Ave., North Hills,
Penna. 19363. Make checks payable
to: Overholser Family Association.

BITS AND PIECES

(Anyone who has items of interest
for this column should submit them
to the editor.)

Three Mennonite Historical Libraries
are now on the mailing list for this
Bulletin, those at Bluffton, Ohio;
Lancaster, Pa.; and Lansdale, Pa.

The Iranian situation has touched
very closely at least one family in
our Oberholtzer clan. At this writ-
ing the brother-in-law of Ruth Hain
Schaefer is still being held hostage
in Iran; he is Col. Thomas E. Schae-
fer, senior military attache at the
embassy. Ruth is the great-great-
granddaughter of IV Jacob (1802-
1871), son of III Martin, and lives
in Laureldale, Pa.

Pauline Stroeble Oswald has agreed
to assume the duties of conducting
research for the III Martin, IV
Elizabeth line. She is a great
granddaughter of this Elizabeth who
married Samuel Watts. Would others
volunteer to research other lines
starting with the 4th generation
descendants of immigrant Samuel?

(continued on page 6)

My name is DANIEL FRANTZ OVERHOLSER.
When I tell you that I am 168 years
old, you will know that this is my
spirit addressing you today, August
25, 1979.

My bones lie right here in this cem-
etry (adjacent) with my two sisters,
Anna and Elizabeth, and four of my
brothers, John, Jacob, Samuel and
Isaac. My brother, Martin, died
young and is buried down there in
the Weaverland Cemetery with my
father, Martin Overholser, and my
mother, Maria Elizabeth Frantz. They
were Mennonites and members of the
Weaverland Church.

But enough of cemeteries and bones.
I want to tell you of my life in the
flesh here on earth. I walked on
this earth 64 years: the first 25
right here in Terre Hill where I was
born in 1811, then 10 years in Green-
wood up in Mifflin County, then back
in this town for 25 years, and my
last 3 years in Wabank, near Millers-
ville.

Education interested me during my
early life here, and I was allowed
to have more academic training than
my sisters and brothers (maybe be-
cause I was the youngest). I at-
tended the new Academy in West Ches-
ter. When my father died in 1833, I
was only 22 years old. When I was
26 and Anna Landis was 18, we were
married in the Lancaster Trinity
Lutheran Church on December 1, 1836.
Anna was the daughter of Squire
Joseph Landis, a direct descendant
of Quakertown John Landis, a 1717
Swiss Mennonite immigrant. Her
mother was Anna Shirk, whose father,
Peter Shirk, was the first preacher
of that Weaverland Church down there
at the bottom of the hill.

Most of my family were farmers and
millers who stayed here on the land
which my father gave them. With my
young wife Anna, I left Terre Hill
(once known as Fairville) and Lancas-
ter County. News had reached us
that up in Mifflin County a new iron
furnace had been built near the
Amish settlement in the Kishacoquil-

las Valley. The furnace and the town were both called Greenwood. There would be great opportunities for young people in the new town which quickly sprang up around the only charcoal pig iron industry in Pennsylvania.

Poor wagon roads and no bridges made our 100 mile journey along and across the Susquehanna River a hazardous one. However, what you read about me is true. I was tall, athletic, strong, and bold. My good health was an asset in traveling and in establishing our new farm and store in Greenwood. Our first child, Lizzie, was born in 1837 and then Mary Ann, who died one month before Anna was born in 1842. Shortly before our first son, Martin, was born in 1843, I was appointed Post Master of Belleville, a town on the other side of the mountain, just a few miles away. Here we also attended the Whitefield Methodist Church. Martin was two years old when my wife, Anna, died January 3, 1845 -- only 27 years old. Her tombstone is the largest of nearly a dozen in the corner of a field on the outskirts of Belleville. With my three small children I came back here to my family in Terre Hill. People might say that I lived the prime of my life, age 25 to 35, up in Mifflin County in the Kishacoquillas Valley.

In 1845, I married Mary Lichty. We raised Anna's three children and eight of our own. Milling and farming occupied my interest, and I owned mills in Windsor and White Horse. We attended the Methodist Church in Churchtown, just a few miles east of here. I am proud to say that my children, Anna and Martin, were among the first students to attend Millersville Academy, which opened in 1855. (Martin was the very first president of this Overholser organization.)

In 1872, the same year as the tragic death of my daughter Anna's husband, David Wolf, we moved to Wabank. Here, on the Conestoga Creek four

miles south of Millersville, I owned a grist mill and a woolen mill. My oldest son, Martin, left his teaching position to manage these mills for me. I had bought this property for \$12,000 in 1856. It included dwellings, a barn, and the water rights to Dam #3. During my lifetime, I bought and sold much property as my father before me. He owned land in Canada; I owned land in Missouri. You can find in the Lancaster County Court House 26 recordings of deeds to lands that I bought and sold. Countless other transactions I made like Christ Yoder up in Belleville, saying, "I'll take your word if you'll take mine, and we'll not need an article of agreement". "Your word to me is as good as your bond," said his neighbor.

1875 was the year of four deaths in our family: brother John, age 82; Isaac, age 68; my sister, Anna, age 87; and I, age 64. Only my brother, Christian, lived after 1875; he died in 1884 and is buried in Salisbury Township at Cains. Though not a Mennonite, religion was very important to me. Most of my life I was a member of the Methodist Church.

(The above was written by Mildred Brown Pettigrew of Pottstown, Pa., [descendant of IV DANIEL] and was read at the Overholser reunion on August 25, 1979. In her research, Mildred was unable to find the answers to the seven questions listed below. Do you have any of the answers? If so, send your response to M. B. Pettigrew, address on page 8. --Ed.)

1. Why did I leave West Chester Academy before graduating?
2. What really attracted me in Greenwood, Mifflin County?
3. What caused my wife, Anna's, death?
4. Which farm did my father give to me?
5. Why wasn't I a Mennonite?
6. My estate was valued at \$43,000. Why does a family report say that I died "poor"?
7. Why didn't I make a will?

THE SALISBURY TOWNSHIP OBERHOLSERS

One of the most prolific branches of the Oberholtzer family is the line of which Christian (1798-1884) and Susanna Showalter Kurtz (1804-1860) were the progenitors. Christian was the great grandson of immigrant Samuel, who arrived in America in 1727; the grandson of Martin (d. 1767); and the son of Martin (1764-1833). Born in Terre Hill, Pa., one of the nine children of Martin Oberholtzer and Elizabeth Frantz, he, apparently at an early age, migrated to Salisbury Township, Lancaster County, Pa., where he wooed, won and wed Susanna Showalter Kurtz, the daughter of a neighboring farmer.

If one may judge from the contents of Christian's will, he became one of the successful farmers of the area, owning several farms and woodlots at the time of his death. Three of his farms were occupied by sons Levi and Martin and daughter Kathryn (married to Benjamin Franklin Bunn), and the privilege was given them to purchase their respective farms at a price set forth in the will, the remainder of his property (one farm, several woodlots and his personal property) to be sold and the total amount "to be distributed to my heirs in accordance with law".

Thirteen children resulted from the marriage of Christian and Susanna, five of whom died in infancy, namely: John, infant, Christian, Amos, and Sarah Jane. A sixth, Mary Ann, died in 1860 at the age of 23. The remaining seven (Isaac, Levi, Martin, Caroline, Catherine, Louisa and Harriet) were either farmers or the wives of farmers and, in turn, the progenitors of the more than 350 descendants of Christian and Susanna.

Christian, Susanna, son Isaac, daughter Mary, and the five infants are buried in the Kurtz family burial plot located on the edge of a woods on a farm then belonging to the Kurtz family and now in the pos-

session of an Amishman named King. Altho the cemetery is in a deplorable condition, the markers of the above may still be found. Many years after the deaths of Christian, Susanna, Isaac and Mary, a memorial marker was erected to their memory in the Pequea Baptist Church Cemetery by Louisa Oberholser Brubaker, a daughter of Christian and Susanna.

Perhaps the most prolific and certainly the most interesting line of Christian's children was that of son Isaac, who died in 1861 at age 35, leaving a widow and three small children: Harlan, Ellen, Elizabeth. Harlan, apparently, was raised by his grandfather, Christian, and Aunt Harriet, Susanna having died the previous year. At an early age he went to Kansas where he married Harriet Jane Galbraith on June 18, 1888. Five children resulted from this marriage: Bernice, Zella, Raymond, Buell and Percey. All are dead with the exception of Bernice, now 88 years old and very busy caring for her invalid third husband in Bull Shoals, Arkansas. Zella married a minister and was the mother of fifteen children. One, a daughter, died at age four, but the remaining fourteen, by their own efforts, graduated from college, married and have had interesting and successful careers. Last Memorial Day, nine of the eleven still living held a family reunion at Miltonvale, Kansas, where Zella and her husband are buried.

Levi, co-executor of Christian's will, purchased the farm on which he was living in accordance with the terms of his father's will and lived on it until his death in 1920. Married to Sarah, they had eight children: Jacob, Brinton, Louie, Liela, Kurtz, John, infant Ada, and infant Isaac. Levi and his wife, Sarah, are buried in the Pequea Baptist Cemetery.

Martin also bought the farm on which he lived, as provided in his father's will. On February 17, 1853, he had married a Quaker maid, Anna Mary

Frances Haines, who lived on a nearby farm with her widowed mother and sister. Six children resulted from this marriage: Ida, Mary, Ella, Christian, Lydia and Reuben, a graduate of The University of Vermont and later chief chemist at the Carnegie Steel Company. Both Martin and Anna Mary are buried in the Pequea Baptist Cemetery.

Caroline was born in 1843 and married Samuel Reeser, who lived on a nearby farm which is still farmed by a member of the family. Caroline and Samuel had two daughters: Elizabeth, who married Amos Skiles, and Annie M., who died when two years old. Elizabeth and Amos were the parents of one son, whose son, Kenneth, and grandson, Jerre, are the successful and prosperous present operators of the farm which has been in the family many generations.

Catherine, married to Benjamin F. Bunn, also accepted the provisions of Christian's will and purchased the farm on which they lived, remaining there until they died. Both Catherine and Benjamin are buried in the Faggs Manor Presbyterian Cemetery, near Cochranville, Pa. Three children resulted from this union: Clement, B. Franklin and Harriet.

Louisa married Abraham Brubaker, whose sister, Louisa, was married to Isaac. Abraham, after service in the Civil War, farmed at Wagon-town, Pa., where they died without issue.

Harriet, who according to her father's will, inherited his horse and the pick of his cows in addition to her proper share of his estate, married J. Hampton Skiles. They died without issue. Both are buried in the Pequea Baptist Cemetery, where so many of the descendants of Christian and Susanna are buried.

(Submitted by Robert M. Oberholser, Freehold, N. J. [descendant of IV Christian] and was read at the Overholser reunion on Aug. 25, 1979.)

RESEARCH UPDATED NEXT ISSUE

John L. Overholt of Kilmarnock, Virginia read a paper at the 1978 reunion reporting on the research he had done during the previous year or two which was printed in Vol. I, No. 1 of this Bulletin. He submitted an update on that research for the 1979 reunion. Two of the papers read at the 1979 reunion are included in this issue and John's paper will be included in the next issue of this Bulletin.

NECROLOGIST'S REPORT

Deaths in 1979:

- Jan. 20 - J. Morris Clark
(K. Bunn grandson)
- Mar. 3 - Mary LaBarre Eyer
(sister of Weston)
- Apr. 13 - Charles Carroll
(husband of Marjorie)
- May 5 - Catherine LaBarre Smith
- May 28 - Rev. Gordon Oswald
(husband of Pauline)

Mrs. Kathryn Dean, Richmond, Ind., (secretary of an Indiana Oberholtzer organization) reported the following deaths:

- Mrs. Fred Fillman
- Mr. Merrit Oberholtzer
- Mr. Lloyd Oberholtzer
- Mrs. Doy Gorrell

Marriages in 1979:

- May 12 - Jeffrey Carl Morton to Annetta Rosemary Pluck
- June 1 - Michael Philip Morton to Kim Denise Hogan
- June 23 - Theodore Getzel to Anne Elizabeth Moynahan (dau. of Eliz. Moynahan, sister of Kenneth)

(Printed as submitted by necrologist, Robert M. Oberholser. Additional entries should be sent to him at: R.D.#2, Ardena, Freehold, New Jersey 07728.)

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for Vol. II, No. 2, will be July 1, 1980. All copy submitted for publication will be considered, but will be published at the discretion of the editor.

Louisa Oberholser Brubaker had a tombstone erected in the Pequea Baptist Cemetery, Cains, Salisbury Twp., Gap, Pa., in memory of her father, Christian Oberholser (1798-1884), who married Suzanna Kurtz. Louisa also left a legacy in her will to erect the gates and a fence around the cemetery. Christian and Suzanna, however, are buried in the Kurtz family cemetery in Salisbury Twp., Lancaster Co., Pa., several miles away.

Referring back to page 4 of the Aug. 1979 Bulletin, that the first reunion was held on a "little island in the Conestoga Creek near Terre Hill", to date there have been no responses to that call for help. At the reunion at Terre Hill this past August, Lorraine Brown Neikirk was asked about this because she attended the first reunion in 1906, but she stated that she was only 4 years old then and doesn't remember the island. Can anyone help?

A copy of the genealogical records, which Rev. Isaiah E. Oberholtzer of Trotwood, Ohio, had collected over a period of many years and later turned over to J. Spencer Overholser in 1956 by his widow, has been deposited in the Mennonite Historical Library, Lancaster, Pa. See pages 2 and 3 of the April 1978 issue of the Pennsylvania Mennonite Heritage for more about Rev. I. E. Oberholtzer.

Lois Ann Zook, librarian of the Mennonite Historical Library, Lancaster, Pa., writes the following after receiving the August 1979 Bulletin: "It's newsy, easily readable, and varied enough to interest any Overholser researcher."

Your president is still looking for either a replacement for the present editor or at least an assistant editor.

Do you want to have a column for lost persons and/or queries in this Bulletin? Submit examples to the editor so a determination can be made whether such a plan appears feasible for future Bulletins. Initially, only descendants of immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer, please.

There are now 244 names on our mailing list.

Would someone volunteer to attempt to incorporate our association as a non-profit organization?

This Bulletin has been included in the listing of genealogical periodicals throughout the United States in the Genealogical Periodical Index - 1977 which is published by Laird C. Towle, Ph.D., Editor, 3602 Maureen Lane, Bowie, Md. 20715.

Do you have any suggestions as to what other types of material should be included in the Bulletin? Send your suggestions to the editor.

TREASURER'S REPORT (8/25-12/23/79)

Receipts:

8/25	Balance	132.92
8/25	Reunion Collection	109.25
9/28	Interest	1.17
8/25-12/23		
	Contributions	35.00
		<u>278.34</u>

Expenses:

12/4	Balance due on '79	
	Park rental	5.00
12/11	Beatrice Bayley (copy of Overholser Family Book	19.85
		<u>24.85</u>
12/23	Balance	253.49

Note: The books were audited at the reunion, August 25, 1979. (Report submitted by the treasurer, Mrs. Marjorie Carroll, 319 Monroe Ave., North Hills, Pa. 19038. Additional contributions may be sent to her.)

1979 REUNION



Photo by Sylvia Stockwin, Bexhill-on-Sea, England

1979 REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

A total of 52 of the Oberholtzer (Overholser, etc.) clan gathered at the Terre Hill, Pa., town park at noon August 25, 1979, for a covered dish meal, followed by an opportunity to get acquainted and to exchange genealogical anecdotes.

After a group picture was taken, the meeting began about 2:00 p.m. with the invocation by Rev. John Weiler of Easton, Pa. As each one introduced himself, indications were included as to which "branch" of the "tree" each "stemmed" from.

Genealogical reports were presented by the designated researchers (see page 8). Some of these reports are included elsewhere in this Bulletin.

As has been the custom for many years, the Overholser Reunion Song was sung, this year under the leadership of Ruth Overholser of Oley, Pa. This song was written by Edwin L. Watts for the 1919 reunion.

The "hat was passed" and \$109.25 was collected for the treasury.

Two individuals who attended the 1st reunion in 1906 were present at this 1979 reunion, viz., Lorraine Brown Neikirk of Frostburg, Md., and Esta Buch Herr of Akron, Pa.

One unusual and delightful aspect of the 1979 reunion was the fact that we had two ladies from Bexhill-on-Sea, England, with us for the day; they were spending several weeks with Ruth and Spencer Overholser at Oley, Pa. How often have visitors from other countries attended an Overholser reunion? Perhaps as the minutes of previous reunions are reprinted in this Bulletin we'll find the answer.

Prizes were awarded as follows:
Oldest - Robert M. Oberholser, Freehold, N.J.
Youngest - Douglas Browne, Langhorne, Pa.
From furthest distance - Bill Goshen North Cape May, N.J.

Regrets were announced from 17 who indicated that they were unable to attend the reunion this year.

The officers to serve for the following year were elected. (see p. 8)

The next reunion will be held at Terre Hill, Pa., Memorial Park on Saturday, August 23, 1980.

(A more complete account of the 1979 reunion is recorded in the minutes of the association.)

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCHERS

III Christian

IV Samuel - Henry Oberholtzer, R.D.#1, Summitville, Ind. 46070

III Martin

IV Daniel - Mildred Brown Pettigrew, 816 N. Evans St., Pottstown, Pa. 19464

III Martin

IV Christian - Robert M. Oberholser, R.D.2, Ardena, Freehold, N.J. 07728

III Martin

IV John - J. Spencer Overholser, P.O Box 106, Oley, Pa. 19547

III Martin

IV Elizabeth - Pauline Stroeble Oswald, 29 Belmont Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17601

OFFICERS

President - J. Spencer Overholser, Oley, Pa.

1st Vice Pres. - John L. Oberholser, Narvon, Pa.

2nd Vice Pres. - Vacant (Mildred Pettigrew resigned because of personal commitments.)

Corresponding Sec'y - Elizabeth Oberholser Frey, Freehold, N.J.

Recording Sec'y - Paul Pletcher, New Holland, Pa.

Treasurer - Marjorie Chubb Carroll, North Hills, Pa.

Chaplain - Rev. John R. Weiler, Easton, Pa.

Honorary Vice Pres. - Harold Barr, Lancaster, Pa.

Honorary Vice Pres. - Esta Buch Herr, Lititz, Pa.

Overholser Family Association
P.O. Box 106
Oley, Pa. 19547

