



# OFA Bulletin

*Published Semi-annually by the Overholser Family Association*

Summer 2011 ISSN 0742-8472 Vol. XXXIII No. 2

Oberholtz	Uberholtzer	Overholser	Oberheuser
Overhults	VanHulser	Overhuls	
Overhalser	Overhalt	Atherholt	Obold
Uberholser	Overholtzer	Overholt	
Overhulster	Oberholser	Oberholtzer	

## **BOTH Reunion Dates**

**August 6, 2011 Reunion St John's UCC and August 20, 2011 O Mansion, OKC, OK**

On August 5th 6:00PM we will begin our Reunion with a meal at Yoder's Resturant in New Holland PA. The meeting room is at the back of the dining room. Those coming long distance can spend extra time getting to know us, and getting their questions answered. Some locals come on Friday Night because they cannot make it on Saturday. On August 6th 2011, we will have our regular **OFA Reunion at St John's Church of Christ** in Bowmansville PA. We begin getting there at 10AM, with lunch at around 12 Noon. Main dish provided for lunch. You may bring a salad or desert. After lunch we will be discussing future issues of family lines, as we wish to get some consensus for future plans. Janet Oberholtzer will be speaking on Road to Recovery. Also, come and see a paper copy of our updated computer files.

On August 20, 2011 there will be a **First North American O Reunion**. Join us 10AM at the Overholser Mansion in Oklahoma City Oklahoma. After touring the mansion, (\$8 Adult, \$5 Seniors), we will break for lunch and then gather from 1 to 4PM at 1st Free Methodist Church, 1900 NW 13th, OKC, OK 73106 (13th & Kentucky) for a gathering. Paper copies of the Family Line computer files will be there for review. Rather than a formal meeting, we wish to spend more time getting to know those who come. About 20 have already proposed to come. There is no need for advance notice.

Afterward 4PM, Earline & I plan to drive around Lake Overholser, then take in Bricktown. Then at dusk we are going to the OKC Memorial to see the lights, and have a short prayer time. We may have a special guide join us. Maybe some of you can join us there.

The Bulletin is really stuffed this time. That is a good sign that others are interested in what we are trying to do with the OFA. Our biggest drawback is the lack of activities for the children at the local Reunion, and the lack of children. We are in need of families with children to help grow the local reunion. Please consider bringing the whole gang!

Yours respectfully, Dennis L Oberholtzer

**Overholser Family  
Association Bulletin**

Vol. XXXIII No. 2 Summer 2011

Editor - Dennis L. Oberholtzer  
49 Paradise Lane  
Paradise, Pa. 17562

©2011 Overholser Family Association  
49 Paradise Lane, Paradise, PA 17562  
ISSN 0742-8472

**CONTRIBUTIONS**

Please send all contributions to:  
Carolyn O. Kendall, Treasurer  
1617 New Holland Pike  
Lancaster, PA 17601

**CORRESPONDENCE**

OFA Website:  
<http://mysite.verizon.net/vzevgxav/ofa>

Letter to the Editor or  
e-mail to  
[Paradise\\_Living50@verizon.net](mailto:Paradise_Living50@verizon.net)

**Wecome New OFA Members!!!**

Linda O Nitterauer, HJ Line  
Jerry & Janet Oberholtzer, PA, SL Line  
Vernon Overholt, TN, MC Line  
Michael A Martin, Rahway NY, SL Line  
John Sykes, Lewes DE, HA Line  
William Leibold, Buffalo NY, CH Line  
Robert J Overholser, JL Line  
Nelson LaFon, VA, JL2 Line  
Mable Burkholder, Fleetwood PA, SL Line

If anyone would like to change to a paper or a PDF format of future OFA Bulletins, just drop a line to the editor.

Check out the OFA WEBSITE:  
<http://mysite.verizon.net/vzevgxav/ofa>

***Scam Alert!***

*Someone from Northwest Africa has been sending a message about a PA Overholser.*

*Do Not associate with him.*

*It is a scam.*

**ConGRADulations!**

"We do have some exciting news. Our daughter Megan Ring will be graduating from Medical from the U of Mich. on May 13, 2011. So we will have an MD in the Overholt Family in Pediatrics. We won't know until March where her residency will be." - Jody Overholt-Ring

**HAPPY NEW WORLD!!!**

**DAUGHTER** Kevin R & Lisa (Burkholder) Oberholtzer, Ephrata PA, 2/8/11 Reading Birth & Women's Center on Tuesday - Lancaster Intel 2/11/11

**SON** Clinton & Dara (Melrath) Oberholtzer, Nottingham PA, 2/25/2011 - Lanc Intel 2/28

**DAUGHTER** Dr James & Jana (Oberholtzer) MacKay, Elizabethtown PA, Birth Care Services, Bart PA

**KOLB, KULP, CULP, FAMILY REUNION**

**Sunday, June 12th, 2011 at 12:30 P.M. Lower Skippack Mennonite Church**

Evansburg & Meetinghouse Roads, near Skippack, PA, where the first immigrant Kolbs, sons of the German Tielman Kolb, settled, worshipped and are buried.

This will be the 304<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their arrival in this land.

ALAN G. KEYSER will speak about **Hearth Cooking among the Pa. Dutch, including baking and smoking food.**

A local historian and Pa. German scholar, Alan Keyser, has written extensively on the Pa. Germans, co-authoring *Farming, Always Farming* (Pa. German Society, 1987). He has been guest curator and lecturer at the Mennonite Heritage Society including at their exhibit 'Grandma's Kitchen'.

**GROANING BOARD & PIE CONTEST**

**Catered Lunch begins at 1:00 p.m.; lunch is free. We urge you to bring side dishes, drinks, and desserts to share.**

If possible, please bring Pennsylvania Dutch (or other) side-dishes, condiments, drinks and desserts for your family and to share with the common table.

**Bring your pies for a pie contest with expert judges and prizes for the best pies!**

**FOOD, FELLOWSHIP, FAMILY & SONG**

Come dine, sing, and explore with us your family history & connections. All are invited; bring friends and family! Children are welcome! Come to an 'old time' reunion; meet your relatives, Kolbs, Kulps, and Culps and more from all over the country.

Glenn Landis will be present as our genealogical resource; Glenn Kulp will share information on the family descended from George Michael Kolb. Both Glenns will answer your genealogical questions.

Kulp tapes, tiles, T-shirts, and genealogical books will be on sale.

Just call or email for information & lunch reservations: Ruth Knapp Oberholtzer at 209 S. 5th Street, North Wales, PA 19454, 215-699-3940.

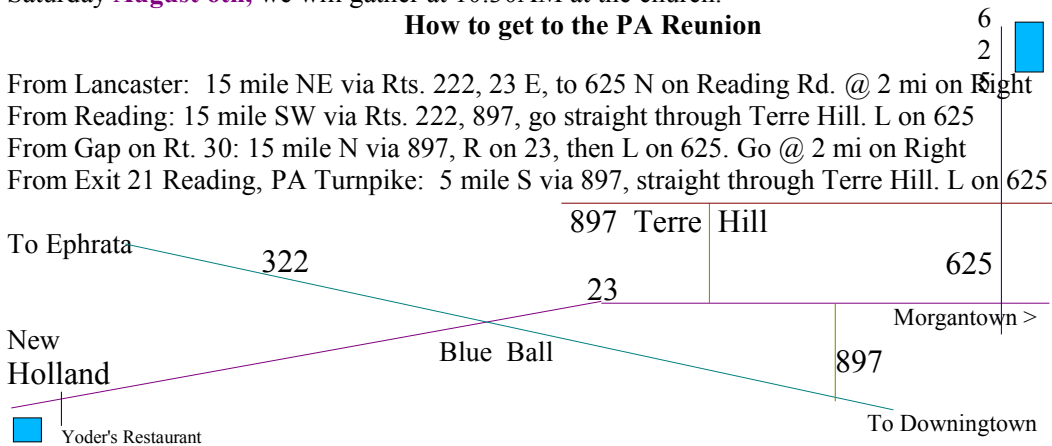
Email Ruth at [Ruthoberho@aol.com](mailto:Ruthoberho@aol.com) or Grace Freed Muscarella, at [gracefreed@aol.com](mailto:gracefreed@aol.com).

**2011 OVERHOLSER PA REUNION**

The Reunion will be held **August 6th** at St. John's Center United Church of Christ, east of Terre Hill on Route 625 where it was held in 2009. On Friday night, **August 5th**, we will meet at Yoder's between New Holland and Blue Ball for a 6:00PM buffet dinner and visiting. Be sure to notify Carolyn Kendall (address on Officer's List) in advance so they know how many to expect. On Saturday **August 6th**, we will gather at 10:30AM at the church.

**How to get to the PA Reunion**

From Lancaster: 15 mile NE via Rts. 222, 23 E, to 625 N on Reading Rd. @ 2 mi on Right  
 From Reading: 15 mile SW via Rts. 222, 897, go straight through Terre Hill. L on 625  
 From Gap on Rt. 30: 15 mile N via 897, R on 23, then L on 625. Go @ 2 mi on Right  
 From Exit 21 Reading, PA Turnpike: 5 mile S via 897, straight through Terre Hill. L on 625



## Obituaries

Shirley Ann Oberholtzer 80 years, died February 21, 2011, d/o [Isaac H Oberholtzer & Laura Risser Witmer](#). Survived by son James P Oberholtzer of Mountville, Lancaster Co PA, brother Herbert R Witmer of Hellertown, sister Verna Lofing of Mountain Home ID. Preceded in death by a brother Laurance R Witmer.

Anna Gehman Oberholtzer 94 years d/o Jacob & Susanna (Weaver) Gehman, wife of the late [Phares G Oberholtzer](#). Survived by Lloyd Oberholtzer, Bamberg SC, James Oberholtzer of Lititz PA, Richard Oberholtzer of Lexington SC, dau Naomi (Dr Jon) Gerrard of Winnipeg CAN. She was a member of Blainsport Mennonite Church, volunteering MCC & several sewing circles.

Stella Oberholtzer Esbenschade 98 years d/o [Clayton H & Lizzie Oberholtzer Nolt](#), the wife of J Ross Esbenschade, they operated an egg farm & produce. Member of Mt Joy Mennonite Church, and made many quilts as donations to charity auctions. She is survived by 3 daughters, Erma E Hollinger of Mt Joy, Doris M Landis of Lancaster, & Evelyn Rohrer of Millersville PA. - Lanc Intel

John Oberholtzer Nolt 71 years of Myerstown PA, 12/18/1939 Lititz PA - 4/1/2011 at home.  
s/o [Paul S & Esther B Oberholtzer Nolt](#), John worked as a farmer for many years, then retired after 20 years from Rigidply Rafters of Richland. Survived by his wife Esther Mae Harnish, dau Sharon Witmer of Richland, dau Rose Shirk of Womelsdorf, Margaret Nolt of Shippensburg, Darlene Dueck of SC, John Mark of Perkins OK, Steven of Manns Choice PA, Gary of Lebanon, Timothy & Jeffery of Myerstown. - Intel

Darrin Oberholtzer 1 year of Alta Vista Iowa, born May 29, 2009 died April 6, 2011 at home, s/o Luke & Ethel (Burkholder) Oberholtzer, is survived by 4 siblings: Kyle, Kendra, Keri & Karla Oberholtzer, all at home. Paternal Grandparents [Joseph & Martha Oberholtzer](#) of Leola PA. He is buried at Deerfield Mennonite Church, Cheyenne Ave, Ionia IA.

[John O Nolt](#) 71 years, 12/18/1939 - 4/1/2011 Myerstown PA, husband of Esther Mae Harnish. farmer & worked Richland Rafters, member Richland Mennonite Church. Survived by his wife, daughter Sharon Witmer of Richland, Rose Shirk of Womelsdorf, Margaret Nolt of Shippensburg, Darlene Dueck of Olar SC, John Mark Nolt of Perkins OK, Steven Nolt of Manns Choice PA, Gary Nolt of Lebanon PA, Timothy Nolt & brother Jeffrey Nolt both of Myerstown. Preceded by brother Luke.

[Aaron N Zimmerman](#) 78 of Lititz PA, s/o the late John E & Katie (Nolt) Zimmerman, and husband of Eva Burkholder. Survived by wife, son Paul of Bernville, Vera of Lititz, Alta Lehman of Newmanstown, Earl of Lititz, Marvin of Oakland Mills, Ruth of New Holland, Eva Mae Oberholtzer of Ephrata, Elva Hurst of Lititz, and Aaron Ray of Lititz. Entered rest on August 18, 2010.

### MARRIAGES

[Jolene D Oberholtzer](#) 27 of Nottingham PA, d/o late Nelson Oberholtzer & Brenda Young to Kenneth R Burkholder 27 of Leola PA s/o Amos & Irene Burkholder

[Crystal Iris Oberholtzer](#) 26 of Bernville PA, d/o Dennis L & Earline (Stancliff) Oberholtzer to Jason Earl Kauffman of Bernville PA, s/o Ron & Barbara Kauffman on June 4, 2011.

## CONTRIBUTORS

Thank You to these Additional Contributors for 2010 which were missed on the last Bulletin:

Carolyn O Kendall, Lancaster PA

Michael A Martin, Rahway, NY

Karen L Stevens, Lititz PA

Ervin W & Lou Ellen Watts, Franklin IN

Ms Carolyn Brandon, Celina OH

### Update on 300th Anniversary video

I did get video of the people at the Reunion in Willow Street last summer, with the help of Christopher Weiler. Earline & I also went to Cook Forest to video some of the remaining virgin forest from Penn's Woods. I have been slowed by other priorities. I also have been snagged by a lack of clear data as to where the original Minqua Trail went from Indiantown to Philadelphia. I do plan to finish taking pictures by fall 2011, and edit it into a finished product over next winter. I feel it is important to have this because already much of the initial history of the earliest pioneers have been hidden and/or lost.

### Still need a 2nd Vice-President

Some people are reluctant to serve 6 years as an officer of an association. If you would like to serve for a lesser time, please let us know, and we can accomodate that. It is more important to have a turnover of new blood into the officers, in order to get new ideas, and better operating procedures. We are hoping to find a local family who could grow a children's program of activities also. So please do not hold back due to time constraints. Carolyn Kendall, Earline & I pretty much hold down the fort. But those who can fill in with new ideas are what really keep the Reunion alive and well.

### OFA OFFICERS

#### Lines

SL, JL	Past President	Paul Weiler	10738 Buchanan Trail East, Waynesboro, PA 17268 <a href="mailto:kwpw8@earthlink.net">kwpw8@earthlink.net</a>
SL, AO, & JF	President Bulletin Editor	Dennis L. Oberholtzer	49 Paradise Lane, Paradise, PA 17562 <a href="mailto:dloberholtzer@verizon.net">dloberholtzer@verizon.net</a>
SL	1st Vice-president	Jack Street	2059 Noss Rd., York, PA
SL	Secretary	Carol Carroll	31 Kelly Drive, Wheeling WV 26003 <a href="mailto:carolsquared@verizon.net">carolsquared@verizon.net</a>
SL	Treasurer	Carolyn O. Kendall	1617 New Holland Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601 <a href="mailto:cokendall@gmail.com">cokendall@gmail.com</a>
JL	Website Sponsor	John Shinpaugh	<a href="http://mysite.verizon.net/vzevgxav/ofa">http://mysite.verizon.net/vzevgxav/ofa</a>
SL, JL	Chaplain	Rev. John R. Weiler	526 Wood St. Apt. 424, Bethlehem, PA 18018

## CEMETARY INSIGHTS

### **GANTZ MENNONITE CEMETERY - An archaeologists rebuttal**

On the west side of Manheim, Lancaster County, along Colebrook Road, is an old church on the east side of the road, and Gantz Cemetery on the west side. The Gantz Mennonite Church has long since dissolved, and a modern more charismatic church is in its place.

What stunned me was the fact that the cemetery had not placed a new grave in over one hundred years! Since I do a tremendous amount of studying in Biblical archaeology, my mind immediately brought up some squabbles by modern archaeologists who claim that since no evidence is found at a Biblical site during a hundred year period, no one lived in the vicinity. This graveyard is solid proof that archaeologists are wrong in their assumptions. People have lived in the area, they just chose not to bury their dead in this particular cemetery.

In looking at the peoples names, the back row of stones stood high. Made of sandstone, they included a sun shaped center top, inscribed with an eight-pointed star. It is very rare to find an eight-pointed star in a Lancaster County cemetery. And there were four of them in this yard. All members of the Ganbir family. I searched to find the meaning of the eight point star. The early Christian writer Ignatius from Antioch called the star "the mysterious human-genesis of Christ himself." How appropriate for an Anabaptist to carry the star into the New World, as a sign of a new life in Christ.

### **MILTON GROVE CEMETERY**

The **Milton Grove Cemetery** is a very old one. It has an iron fence with an elaborate iron double swinging gate. Blacktop driveways go in different directions, both leading to a circle with a large tree in the middle. Another lane comes in from the bottom of the graveyard, bending around to meet at the circle. It is obvious from the present design, the cemetery has been added onto in a rather unplanned way, and at more than one time. The original cemetery sat on the back slope, beyond the circle.

What troubles me with this cemetery is what has been done to seven rows of old stone markers. They have been laid flat into the surface of the ground so they could be mowed over. But in the past few short years, grass has covered many of the stones. This will allow water to enter the surface of the stones, freeze during winter, and break up the facing of the stone until it becomes illegible. This is not a valid form of preservation.

☪☪☪

## JUMPING JOVIAL JACOB!

If there is confusion in the genealogical family, it is often found in the repetition of names. In trying to connect the Immigrants with the known families, I have found there are many Jacob Oberholzers from the 1700's.

JL	Jacob Oberholtzer 1704 - 1755 Brecknock Twp, Lancaster Co PA 1732 Immigrant with 2 children 2nd m Barbara <u>?Kilheffer</u> 10 children
JL8	Jacob Oberholtzer c1751 - c1805 Swatara Twp, present Dauphin Co PA m Anna Lehman c1774 - will date 1820* - d 1823 1 son
* Reference of will date from letter by Penna archival genealogist Martin H Brackbill, 2/6/1981	
JF	Jacob Oberholtzer c1686 EUR - dp Feb 11, 1755 Salford (now Franconia) Twp 1702 Immigrant m Catherine _____ - aft 1755 4 children
JF1	Jacob Oberholtzer bef 1702 - Naturalized 1743 - wp 1759 1702 Immigrant with father m c1728 Deborah Krey b c1711 - aft 1762 8 children
MC1	Jacob Oberholtzer c1699 Palatinate - wp 1760 Bucks Co PA 1712 Immigrant son with MC Marcus m Barbara Wismer 7 children
SL1	Jacob Oberholtzer c1715 - 1727 Immigrant son with SL Samuel 2nd m Catherine (Hershey) Bear 5 children total
ML2	Jacob Oberholtzer 1690/1700 - m Unknown 2 children 1710 Immigrant son with ML Michael
JBsr	Jacob Oberholtzer Sr See Below m Susanna Scheuler 5 children likely his
JB	Jacob Oberholtzer 1741 - 1811 Colebrookdale, Berks Co PA m Esther Blehm 1741 - 1816 Bechtelsville PA 8 children Esther descends from French Huguenots of Manheim GER immigrants 1735
JC	Jacob Oberholtzer c1737 - possibly Northampton Co PA no land, 7 in family m wife born in Ireland 5 children
JC1	Jacob Oberholtzer 1767 Northampton Co PA- 1847 Columbiana Co OH 21 children 1st m Catharina Bachman 1770 - 1806 2nd m Elizabeth Mellinger - OH
JG	Jacob Oberholtzer 1801 - dp 1870 of PA & Indiana m Elizabeth Longnecker c1797 PA - 1886 IN 2 children
KC	Jacob Overholser c1774 - 1815 Kingston, Upper Canada 4 children m Barbara _____ migrated c1810 Bertie Twp, Upper Canada
LC	Jacob Overholt 1777 PA - 1844 Clinton Co ONT m Anna _____ 1775 - 1848 1 child
HJ	Hans Jacob Oberholtzer EUR - 1771 Hatfield Twp PA 1730 Immigrant 1st m Catharina _____ EUR - 1771 Hatfield Twp PA 2 children 2nd m Susanna <u>?UpdenGraff</u> - wp 1777 Hatfield Twp no issue
JW	Jacob Overholt both of Warwick, Bucks Co PA m 11/2/1809 by Rev Silas Hough, Margaret Smith Unknown children
JA4	Jacob Overholser 3/9/1770 Adams Co PA - 3/14/1850 OH 5 children 1st m Elizabeth _____ - 1820/21

I first wish to begin looking at the JB Jacob Oberholtzer family. When Helen Turn was finishing up her book *Samuel Overholtzer of Virginia*, she included some information (in red) which she had gathered and appeared to go together as an earlier generation of JB Jacob of Coolbrookdale.

"Born 1704 in Switzerland, emmigrated to Phila PA 1732 on Samuel." This is incorrect. This reference is now proved to be immigrant JL Jacob Oberholtzer of Brecknock Township.

"Paid quit rent on 150 acres in Franconia Twp by 1734." This also is wrong, as this is the JF Jacob Oberholtzer of Franconia family.

"1st wife unknown. Did not come to America, the following two children came with father: Elizabeth 1726 - , & Samuel 1729 m Eva Elisabeth." These are the children of JL Jacob Oberholtzer of Brecknock Township.

The grouped document also lists the assumed mother and children of the said father of JB Jacob Oberholtzer of Coolbrookdale. The middle initial "S" was likely added by Helen, for no confirmation of such can be found. Susanna Schueler was documented as JBsr's wife as early as 1917 in the Funk Genealogy.

2nd wife Susanna Schueler's children:

Barbara S Oberholtzer 1737-1803 m Christian Bretz [Fretz]

Barbara Ford has confirmed this to be BB Barbara Fretz, the surname starting with a "B" is either a misprint or a language variation.

Jacob S Oberholtzer 1741-1811 m Esther Bleam

This Jacob has proved to be JB Jacob Oberholtzer of Coolbrookdale

Esther S Oberholtzer 1743-1816 single

Noted below with circumstantial evidence as a sister of JB Jacob

Henry S Oberholtzer 1745-1783 m Catherine Shoemaker 1746-1823

Here again the "S" cannot be substantiated, and this is now proved to be JF14 Henry.

It is likely that JB Jacob 1741-1811 and Esther Oberholtzer 1743 - 1816 single are siblings. Their birth dates are only two years apart. Both are buried at Bally Cem. And Jacob has a daughter named Esther, who also happened to remain single. The Pennsylvania Traveler Vol XII gives cemetery records for Bally (now Hereford Cemetery)

Helen Turn used the information provided by JB6 Abraham B Oberholtzer that stated a Henry Oberholtzer was a son of this JBsr Jacob Oberholtzer Sr. But the Henry which Helen is referring to in her book is JF14 Henry Oberholtzer. This is wrong information repeated in another document. This is how later genealogists get to the point of saying they just cannot find the truth. In saying this, I must admit that I cannot find any legal proof of this family. It stands only on the fact that after the bulk of the 18th Century O families have been correctly compiled, the following fits together by place and time circumstantial evidence.

One of the early documents in Grace Milligan's book, *Christian Oberholtzer and Father Jacob* was a letter written to Rev Isaiah Oberholtzer (wrongly given as Isaac). It stated the belief that the father of JL4 Christian Oberholtzer had come over on a ship with the Mussleman family, whose daughter married JL4 Christian. This is true. It also stated JL4 had a brother Jacob who left home and was never heard from again. Barbara Ford believed this Jacob to be JL8, who is found on the 1785 Census of Dauphin Co PA. Therefore, JB Jacob of Berks Co could not be a descendant of JL Jacob Oberholtzer of Brecknock Twp.



Page 312 of Turn's book states that Jacob came to America in 1737 and married Susanna Scheuler. The evidence for Susanna is from the Funk Genealogy. There is evidence that a Jacob Oberholtzer (Sr of JB) came to America, but when is unknown to date of this writing. It is a strong possibility there was a daughter Barbara who later married Christian Fretz.

JB Jacob Oberholtzer was first found on the Frankford/New Hanover Twp, Phila Co (now Montgy Co) tax list 1769 with no acres. It was not until 1774 that Jacob Overholtz of Hanover Twp bought 190 acres in Berks Co from Joseph Fox.

- References:
- JB6 Abraham B Oberholtzer
  - Milton G Oberholtzer, Quakertown PA, Jan 15, 1917.
  - OFA Files
  - *The Oberholtzer Book*, Barbara B Ford, 1995
  - Who is Susanna Scheuler?, Barbara B Ford, OFA Bulletin
  - Berks Co DB 19/199; PA Archives S3, V14/41; William H Oberholtzer, Bethlehem PA
  - Berks Co WB 5/286 (in German) 1811
  - Funk Genealogy

### **JL JACOB OBERHOLTZER**

**JL Jacob of Brecknock** c1704 -1755 Brecknock Twp

JL1 Elisabeth Oberholtzer 8/27/1724 GER - 2/27/1791

m c1745 Rev Christian Bauman 8/13/1724 - 7/25/1790

JL2 Samuel Kilhefer Oberholtzer 1728 GER - wp 12/5/1783 Shenandoah Co VA

Kilhefer is a suggested name, it has not been confirmed. 1728 is to be a confirmed year of birth, since he was 3 years older than his sister when immigrating.

JL's 2nd m Barbara \_\_\_\_\_ - aft 1755

JL3 Johannes Oberholtzer m Elizabeth Brand

JL4 Christian Oberholtzer m Christina Musselman of Earl Twp

JL5 Anna Oberholtzer m Peter Good Brecknock Twp

JL6 Barbara Oberholtzer m Johann Heucher

JL7 Maria Oberholtzer m Abraham Martin

JL8 Jacob Oberholtzer m Anna Lehman

JL9 Magdalena Oberholtzer m Jacob Weaver

JL0 Veronica Oberholtzer m Jacob Guth

### **JB JACOB OBERHOLTZER**

**JBsr Jacob Oberholtzer** b c1710 - c 100 years old Berks Co PA, unlisted grave

m Susanna Schuler no marker to designate wife's grave

Son JB Jacob built a limestone house 1801 on the original 200 acre homestead bought from the Quakers. On the JB farm, on the opposite side of the railroad tracks, stands a log house, one story high. [JB6] Abraham B Oberholtzer wrote "it was so low that a big man could bump his head against the joists. It had a big fire corner. They had no stoves. No cellar. [The log house was] 25 by 40 feet square. It was built right in the middle of the woods. I remember my father and I visited [JB8] Martin Oberholtzer and Betty there - in that house - probably 60 years ago." - Your father, Milton G Oberholtzer, Quakertown PA, Jan 15, 1917

**JBsr1** Catharine Oberholtzer - 10/20/1741 buried Kulpsville Menn Cemetery

**JBsr2** [BB] Barbara Oberholtzer 1737 - 1823 m Christopher Bretz 1787 - 1813

**JBsr3** [JB] Jacob Schueler Oberholtzer 1741 - 4/11/1811 70 yrs

m Esther Blehm 1741 - 11/1/1816 age 75 yrs

Tax list 1769 no acres, living next to Christian Blehm. On 5/27/1774 Jacob of Hanover Twp, Phila Co PA purchased 190 acres in Colebrookdale Twp, Berks Co from Joseph Fox of Phila for £850 without a mortgage.

REF: Franklin H Oberholtzer records, *Oberholtzer Chronology*, Milton #4, Milton G Oberholtzer 1917, Frank stated #3 Jacob & #4 Esther to be twins. The birth dates for the two do not substantiate this claim.

- [bracketed quotes added for clarity by editor DLO]

**JBsr4** Esther Oberholtzer 1743 - 1816 single buried in Bally Cemetery  
Bally is Old Hereford, JB Jacob buried there. So Esther is probably a sister to JB Jacob.

**JBsr5** Henry Oberholtzer - referred to by JB6

JB (JBsr3 above) Jacob Oberholtzer 1741-1811 Bechtelsville, Berks Co m Esther Blehm 1741-1816  
JB1 Eva B Oberholtzer m Abraham Stauffer  
JB2 Barbara Oberholtzer m Jacob Stauffer  
JB3 Christian Oberholtzer m Susanna Mayer  
JB4 Esther B Oberholtzer single  
JB5 Jacob Oberholtzer m Esther Moyer  
JB6 Abraham B Oberholtzer m Susanna Hunsberger  
JB7 Elizabeth Oberholtzer single  
JB8 Martin Oberholtzer m Barbara Clemmer

### **JC JACOB OBERHOLTZER**

**JC Jacob Oberholtzer** b likely in the 40's Germany - aft 1784 Bedminster Co PA no land, 7 in family  
m Irish woman b ? - res Bucks Co mid 1700's - prob aft 1784

A Mennonite minister, according to family tradition, is said to have immigrated in 1760, whose wife is said to have been born in Ireland, came to Bucks Co PA in the mid 1700's. On the 1784 tax in Bedminster Co Jacob Oberholtzer has 7 in his family with no acres which would tie into the children he is said to have had. He is said to have married a woman named Katherine, but there may have been a mix-up in the generations, for his son's wife is also named Catherine. It is unlikely this Jacob came from Ireland, since both he and the family retain the Anglicized version of the Oberholzer name.

REF: Mrs Guy Mellinger, Findlay OH whose research over a period of many years includes records from the Oberholtzer Reunions in Allen Co IN; 1st Annual Oberholtzer Family Reunion October 1, 1898 at the home of William Oberholtzer (s/o Jacob & Maria) in Springfield Twp, Allen Co IN This 1898 chart was added onto at later times.

JC1 Rev Jacob Oberholtzer 6/20/1767 Bucks Co - 7/17/1847 Ashland Co OH, bur Polk Cem, Ashland OH

He lived in Upper Saucon Twp, Northampton Co (now Lehigh) where he purchased 199 acres from his father-in-law, George Bachman 5/8/1794. He is said to have been a minister in the Saucon Mennonite Church and on 10/6/1804 sold his land for 1850 LB; between then and 1806 moved to Columbiana Co OH where it is said he became the first ordained Mennonite minister in Ohio. On 5/9/1807 he purchased Section 29 Beaver Twp from Thomas Farquhar for \$1923. He organized a Mennonite congregation in Beaver Twp in 1815 and in 1825 a log meetinghouse called Oberholtzers was built on Jacob's farm. Because of his disappointment at the congregation's rejection of continuance of the meetinghouse school, he moved to Ashland Co Ohio where he was a minister at Brubakers Mennonite. Tradition says he was a bishop. In the 1870 census his son Isaac said that he was not foreign born.

1st m 1791 Catharina Bachman 3/5/1770 Northampton Co - 11/1806 (MC150)

2nd m 7/19/1807 by John Hoover JP, Elizabeth Mellinger 3/13/1786 Lanc Co PA - 6/19/1867

Elizabeth bur Reedsburg Cem, Wayne Co OH

REF: Northampton Co DB B 3/108, WB 4/232 - George Bachman will; Columbiana Co OH DB A/261; PGM Vol 5/269, Bachman Bible Record; Ashland Co OH - Jacob Oberholtzer will; Wilmer D Swope, Leetonia OH; Ken Hottle, June 1981; Penna Genealogical Magazine Vol 5, pg 270; The Oberholtzer Family Influence on the Mennonite Church in America, Wilmer D Swope, Mennonite Historical Bulletin; The Oberholtzer Riddle, Wilmer D Swope, Mennonite Research Journal 10/1968 V 9 #4; Ralph Smith, Delta OH

JC2 John Oberholtzer

JC3 Abraham Oberholtzer

JC4 Ursula Oberholtzer on 1780 PA Tax List, Upper Salford Twp, Phila Co

Being on the tax list in 1780 implies she is older than brother Jacob.

JC5 Catherine Oberholtzer

555

## DEFINITIONS OF OUR O FAMILY NAMES PART ONE

Oberholtzer, Overholser, Overholt, Oberholzer, Oberholser, Uberholtzer, etc, etc, etc. You get the picture. Several members of our family have been asking "How did we get all those spellings?" Well, I will attempt to answer this the best I can. Some of the most used spellings have clear reasons for the differences. And some can be classified as simple abberations. But even an abberation has clear reasons for it, so I will kiss and tell what I know ( I am writing this on Valentine's Day).

Our family heritage began in the hills southeast of Zurich Lake in the Alps of Switzerland. Hundreds of years before the town of Wald, which lay in the valley below, an Alemanni tribal family migrated to the top of the treeline and built a homestead. They did so in order to plant fast growing crops like oats where they could get enough sunlight for the very short planting season. By the end of the First Millenium A.D., the family began a furniture company, eventually selling church furniture throughout Europe. I surmise that when people would come looking for this furniture maker, neighbors would be asked where they lived. The locals would say "In the *hof obern holz*." all in German of course.

*Ober* meant over or above. The word *holz* is High German, and originally meant a grove of trees.\* So evidently, while there are still woodlands on top of the hillsides east and west of the valley, there were only a grove of trees between the Oberholzer Hof (farm) and the lower part of the valley where the town of Wald is today. Over the centuries the word *holz* came to mean wood in general (timber, lumber, firewood, piece of wood)^. These period dictionary references imply that the grove of trees down the valley from the Hof was used for the making of the furniture, as well as building logs, and firewood for cooking and heating.

The suffix *er* was added to oberholz to mean "the one who is". So the original name in Switzerland meant "the one who is over or above the grove of trees", i.e. *Oberholzer*. Over the years descendants have shortened the definition to say "above the woods."\*\*

The town name of Wald means "woods", but today the town is not in a woods.

Pronunciation has a bit to do with some of the spelling variations. The most common *Oberholzer* makes use of the German O just as the English pronounce it as "oh". Some of the family make use of the spelling Uberholtzer, where the pronunciation is "oo" short as in foot (rather than the English "u"). This latter usage is from the German alphabet, whereas the former more common usage today is derived from the Roman alphabet.^ ^ *Uber* is used in both the dative form and the accusative form. As Anabaptists, some of their foes certainly used the accusative form when condemning the *Uberholzer*.

\* The Classic German Dictionary, Hinds & Noble, Publishers, NYC

\*\* Letter by Rosie Oberholzer, Oberholz Switzerland

^ Cassell's German-English Dictionary, 1978 MacMillan Publishing Co, NY

^^ Essentials of German, 1903 3rd edition, B J Vos, Henry Holt & Co, NY

When the family went through the divisional strife of the Reformation Era, several Oberholzer families were forced to move. Some went to Alsace, France; others into the Palatinate along the Rhine River valley. The 30 years war had left this land desolate from burning out and killing the resident families. The remaining local authorities invited the Anabaptist refugees to stay and rebuild the farms.

While these Oberholzer families retained the spelling of the Swiss High German language, Palatinate records of the 17th century became both obsolete and difficult to find. Some of these Oberholzer families decided to take the risk of emigrating to America (and one to South Africa), in hopes of a more stable food supply, and a fresh start without religious strife.

Most of these O immigrants could not write, and relied on the English ship captains to record their names, while they would make their mark alongside the spelling. The Middle English word for *holz* included the letter "t", as *holtz*. This is how the Oberholtzer spelling came into being. It is an Anglicized version of the German *Oberholzer*.

When later writers from America in the 20th century sought out the Oberholzer families in Europe, they wrote the surname in the Anglicized version of Oberholtzer. This is why so many European documents in Barbara Ford's files predominantly use the English form of our name.

## IRISH INFLUENCES

William Penn was a Christian who belonged to the Quaker Church in England. When he obtained the rights to Penn's Woods, he gathered a contingency of Welsh, Irish and Scottish businessmen and preachers to form his newfound colonial government. Edward Jones was the leader of the group who settled the 40,000 acre Welsh Tract on the west side of the Schuylkill River from Philadelphia. James Logan was a young entrepreneur who would become Secretary of the Interior. John Jones was the largest land investor of the group. With these forerunners came others who would keep ship logs, copy surveys and warrants, record Naturalization papers, etc.

These Scots, Irish, and Welsh used a slightly different dialect than the English from the London area. Instead of Ober they would say *Over*. And instead of saying *holtz* or *holz*, they would pronounce it as *holse*.

At least one of the Oberholzer families were shifted to Ireland prior to immigrating to America. The children of that family took on the Overholser spelling before ever reaching this continent a generation or two later. Other Oberholtzer families would be in America for a while before having an Irish documentor instill the Overholser spelling onto a will, deed etc..

In Part Two of this discussion I will look into some of the rest of the spellings, which have more localized changes to our family name of Oberholz.

555

## **Henry Overholser** **JA430 Apr 14, 1846 - Aug 25, 1915 OK**

Henry Overholser was born in OH. At an early age of 16, Henry learned how to be successful at business in mercantile and real estate in Ohio, and became wealthy through transactions in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Colorado, before settling down in the newly formed Oklahoma Territory. Henry was a get things done kind of guy. Arriving just a few days after the Land Run of April 1889, cargo loads of lumber from Michigan had already arrived by train, ready to set up business buildings on lots he bought on Grand Avenue (present-day Sheridan Ave). Within a month he was elected president of the newly formed Board of Trade, later known as the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. His private life happened just as fast, and in October of the same year he married his second wife Anna Ione Murphy. In just six months Henry had built a completely new life in a barren land. But his own mansion would have to wait until 1904.

Henry went on a tour of Europe in 1911, and while there suffered a stroke. He never recovered from it, lingering as an invalid until his death. As one of the founding fathers of Oklahoma City, he was the engineering hub of the pioneer town, and now its a major city.

### **JA430 Henry Overholser** 4/14/1846 - Wed 8/25/1915 OK

s/o JA43 John Overhalser 4/19/1805 - 6/22/1862 Montgy Co OH  
- chr 4/2/1809 Stoyestown, Somerset Co PA, s/o Jacob & Elizabeth Overhalser  
m Montgy Co OH 3/12/1827 Elizabeth Neiswenger 1/13/1810 OH - 4/27/1890  
d/o Samuel 3/15/1784 VA- 8/20/1866 OH m 9/10/1807 Ellen Dillon 1790-5/22/1853  
both bur Overholser Mausoleum, Arlington Cem, Brookville OH

Henry came to Oklahoma April 22, 1889, at the time of the opening of the OK Territory. He built the Grand Avenue Hotel in 1889 and the Overholser Opera House in 1890. His most notable accomplishment was in 1897 when he induced the Frisco Railroad to extend their line from Tulsa through Oklahoma City. In 1904 he built the Overholser Mansion which is a showplace today in Oklahoma City. He was one of the original Board of Directors of the St Louis & OKC Railroad. Henry suffered a stroke while on tour in Europe in 1911, and lingered as an invalid until his death.

1st m 8/19/1868 IN, **Emma R Hannah\*** c1849 IN - div c1880

REF: Overholser Mansion, Oklahoma Hist Soc, Oklahoma City OK; 1880 Census; Encl. of OK History and Culture; *Ancestry of Desc of Nassau-Siegen Immigrants to VA 1714 - 1750*; Mausoleum reading by Bill & Eunice Overholser, W Milton OH; *Genealogical Index of Pioneers in the Miami Valley OH*, Lindsay M Brien p130; Bruce L Coffey, Freeport ME ; Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture

### **JA4301 Edward Graham McLain Overholser\*** 6/20/1869 Sullivan IN - 4/21/1932 OK

Edward was Henry's son from an earlier marriage with Emma R Hannah.

Mayor of Oklahoma City 1915-1919 Overholser Lake was named in his honor. Served as VP of Prudential Fire Insurance Company, was member of OKC Board of Education, & manager of the city waterworks. From 1922 to Oct 1927 was president of OKC Chamber of Commerce. Member of Masonic Lodge, and the Lutheran Church.

m 5/26/1903 **Allie Garrison** 7/18/1879 AR - 12/7/1944 OK

resided at 130 Grand Ave in 1900 w/ 7 boarders

REF: *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol 9, #2, June 1931; *The Oklahoman*, 2/9/1959 Front Page

### **JA43011 infant** 6/15/1906

**JA43012 Edward Herbert Overholser II** 5/4/1908 Oklahoma City OK - 1989  
m Ethel Margaret \_\_\_\_\_ - 1/6/1870

REF: 1910 Census Oklahoma City; Dennis L Oberholzter

JA43012.1 **Ethel Margaret Overholser "Maggie"** OK State U student  
m Sat, June 20, 1959 **Clyde Scott Russell** s/o Dr & Mrs Clyde G Russell of Altus  
couple lived in Kansas City KS

JA43012.11 Megan Russell m \_\_\_\_\_ Holleyman  
JA43012.111 Daireth Holleyman res Stillwater

JA43012.112 \_\_\_\_\_ Holleyman

JA43012.12 Kristen Russell m \_\_\_\_\_ Josey

REF: *The Oklahoman* May 15, 1989 p19, June 21, 1959 p55

**JA4302 Elizabeth "Queen" Overholser\*** c1871 IN - living 1915 -  
m \_\_\_\_\_ **Pirtle** res KS

**(JA430)** 2nd m 10/24/1889 Rev W L Miller, **Anna Ione Murphy**^ 10/12/1870 Holden MO -4/29/1940 OK  
d/o Samuel Murphy & Delilah Floyd Henry & Anna bur Fairlawn Oklahoma City  
Father Samuel & family moved from Missouri to Harrison, Arkansas  
Arrived at Oklahoma Station OKC on 6/3/1889 from Arkansas, married 4 months later to Henry.

REF: *Biography of Henry and Anna Overholser of Oklahoma City OK*, OK Genealogy Trails; *The Oklahoman*, 4/30/1940 p17;  
*Memory Album of a Territorial Lady*, 1988 Linda Kennedy Rosser; *Evening Gazette*, 10/25/1889

**JA4303 Henry Samuel Overholser**^ 1/24/1891 - 8/1891 infant bur Fairlawn

**JA4304 Henry Ione Overholser**^ 5/5/1905 - 2/8/1959 OK bur Fairlawn no issue  
m 6/1926 by Rev Newton H Royer, **David Jay Perry** 12/2/1902 Fauport MO - 9/23/1991  
David's 2nd m Louise \_\_\_\_\_

REF: *Memory Album of a Territorial Lady*, Oklahoma Hist Soc; *The Oklahoman*, 2/2/1933 p 6 by Dixie Payne; *The Oklahoman*, 9/4/1991; *Biography of Henry and Anna Overholser of Oklahoma City OK*, Genealogy trails.com

Two additional Overholzers were present at an Afternoon Whist Club event on April 15th, the year is undisclosed in the newspaper article, but I suspect it to be about 1898. The Phillips Orchestra played to the audience, which included **Lee Overholser**, and **Will Overholser**, as well as Henry's son Messrs Ed Overholser.

**JA435 Levi Overholser** 2/16/1836 OH- 11/13/1905 OK both bur Fairlawn Cem, Oklahoma City OK  
m 1/12/1861 IL **Mary Elizabeth Young** 11/1841 IL - 4/29/1907 OK

REF: Mark A Branch, New Haven CT

**JA4355 William Levi Overholser** 6/7/1875 IL - 1/2/1964 OK both bur Fairlawn, Oklahoma City OK  
m 11/21/1897 **Ellen King** 4/1877 KY - 12/24/1953 OK sister Lena King born 8/1886 KS  
William operated Overholser & Avey Stationery

REF: 1900 Census, Barbara Ford; Letter by Mark Branch 8/15/1990

Those of us that come to the Overholser Mansion for our First North American O Reunion will now be able to have a better understanding of this most famous O family. Henry's brother Levi has descendants in the area. Henry's descendants live in Kansas City.

☪☪

## Where Do We Go From Here?

When Barbara Ford began compiling the O family lines in the 1980's, she was blanketed with very many O descendants who helped to tabulate the families throughout North America. She made the correct decision to only print the first five generations in America. Trying to do more would have tied up the project to the point of non-publication. From the 1995 publication till her passing in 2007, Barbara continued collecting materials, compiling what she could, and separating them into files. This has made life so much easier for me, and whoever follows me.

But Barbara had lost all her computer files during a file transfer. So after I received the files in November 2007, I realized the need to get the files onto the computer. This is the only way we can find lost connections in a timely fashion. Hunting for one person through seven stuffed filing drawers is not something anyone wishes to, or has time to, do. It will take about another year to finish getting all the names on computer. Considering I still work for a living, I just am not able to do as much as I would like. We still have a file of over 100 people who have not been connected. I hope that you all can be patient with the process.

The question has been raised as to why not just put all the files on-line. The vast majority of the files are dis-connected, and many of the older letters and notes are mixed family lines. If we were to put these files out to the public without any organized format, it would set genealogy back fifty years. At our local Reunion this year, I will be bringing a few of the letters from the files. They will show how as many as a dozen different family lines are mixed together in just two or three pages. Without constant study of the families, there would be no way to separate these mixed groups of people.

### PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Once the family lines have been compiled onto the computer, we can do an easier search for the missing connections. Additional information will be much easier to add, and search time will be greatly reduced. This is number one on our agenda. Helping each family connect with their past is the primary purpose the Association was started. And it took 100 years to reach this present milestone.

For the time being,, the OFA Bulletin will continue to concentrate on going backwards from the book. The majority of people are interested in connecting as far back as possible. This is being made a bit easier since there are now only a few people left from which to choose. Although admittedly some lines may never connect back to Europe.

We will be voting at this year's Reunion as to future publications. At present I am giving direct lines to those hunting for their family without cost. That should not change, as direct lines are not copywriteable. We need to vote on having CD's of O Lines available for \$8, cost going for S&H, and for building a kitty for future paper publications. Some would say "Why paper"? Well for security freaks like me, who believe in magnetic storms from outer space! Paper pubs could have additional stories and articles, and especially pictures of people & home-life. We wish to hear your ideas at the Reunions this year.

SOUTHEASTERN PA, OFA Reunion, Friday Night at Yoder's Rest., 101st Reunion 1st Saturday in August

ELKHART COUNTY INDIANA O's had there 50th Reunion in 2008. Meetings 1st Sunday in August

IOWA O's Meetings 1st Sunday in August in Tingley IA Community Building, 87th Reunion in 2010

**First North American O Reunion**, 3rd Saturday in August 2011

Meet 10AM at Overholser Mansion for tour, Oklahoma City OK see Bulletin notes for more.

FRANKLIN Co PA GROUP, next 2012 Roxbury Holiness Camp, Roxbury PA. They meet every other year. Covered dish, 717-697-0512 or Philip4@comcast.net

If you need more information, contact Dennis at Paradise\_Living50@verizon.net

**Send us your O meeting place and date so we can post it here in our Bulletin.**

---

### THE OBERHOLTZER BOOK

A Foundation book of Oberholtzer immigrants and unestablished lines.

\$29.50 + \$4.50 S & H. PA residents add \$1.77 Sales Tax.

Make check out to: Overholser Family Association

and mail to Carolyn O. Kendall, 1617 New Holland Pike, Lancaster, PA 17601

**Limited copies still available. Get yours today!**

---

### Progress of Computerization of Files

**AS** Abraham Overholtzer, **CA** Christian Overholser, **IB** Isaac Overholt, **JT** Tory John Overholt, **ML** Martin Oberholtzer, **SL** Samuel Oberholtzer, **MV/HO** are all completed with existing files

#### Canadian Lines

**AV** Abraham Overholts

Began compiling some of the Ontario Families

**MM/CH** Christian Oberholtzer

Completed with existing files

**HJ** Hans Jacob Overholtz

Research being done, now locating some Erie/Buffalo lines

**JAsr** John Overholser

Presently being compiled

**JC** Jacob Oberholtzer

Incorporated **JA,AB,JM, & CA** into one family, completed

**JF** Jacob of Franconia

Complete with existing files.

**JL** Jacob of Brecknock

About half-way with existing files

**MC** Marcus Oberholtzer & **MT** Mark 500 pages completed - T Myers

Completed with existing files, J Trump material to add

**JJ** John Oberholtzer

Juniata family being compiled by Connie Overholser & Noah

#### Small Family O Lines

Began compiling the smallest lines in the OFA book

**HA** Henry Overholser

John Sykes reviewing