

Overholser Family Association



Bulletin

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THE PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Forty years ago in May the hostilities ceased in the European Theater of Operations. This year many reunions were held in remembrance of that occasion. It brings to mind my interesting tour of Europe six years ago during the 35th anniversary of D-day; this was a group from the 90th Infantry Division which followed our 1944-45 route.

Other reunions are taking place for other occasions as well. At the time of this writing we are in North Dakota for the 50th anniversary reunion of Ruth's (my wife) high school class. Coming back to our home state is always a "reunion" for invariably we see people whom we have not seen for years and we meet with family to recount memories of the past. The wind-swept prairies with waving grain fields and the blue sky and clear atmosphere are things never to be forgotten which in themselves are "reunions" with things long past.

On August 24th we will have another reunion. This, the annual reunion of the Overholser Family Association, will be another milestone for the group. These reunions had their inception **back** in 1906 and have been held every year since then with the exception of four years during World War II.

Your presence and participation in this reunion will help to perpetuate the association. Future generations will be happy to know that our generation did not fail in keeping alive this organization.

J. SPENCER OVERHOLSER

Grandad loves to prove there's nothing new under the sun. In his day, he says, every horse and buggy had front wheel drive!

76TH ANNUAL REUNION

Date : Saturday, August 24, 1985

Place: Terre Hill Fire Hall,
Terre Hill, PA (see map)

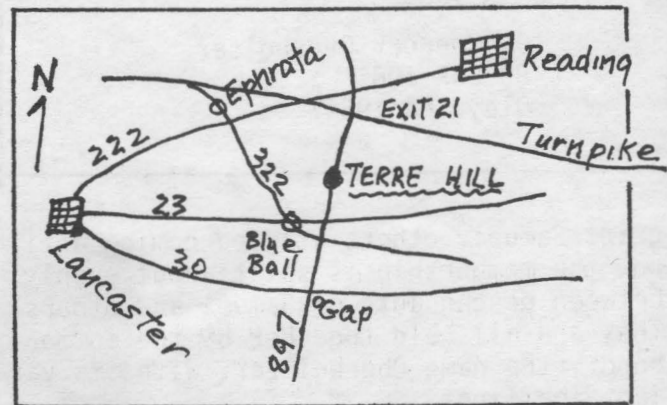
Registration begins at 10:30
Covered dish luncheon at noon
Details below

THE BIG DAY'S A-COMIN!

That's right, folks -- August always means Reunion time! The time every year when we all get together with our 'cousins', talk and eat and have a good time. Make your way to the beautiful town on the hill, Terre Hill (see map), and come to the Fire Hall on the main street, the site of the action. (There is plenty of room for parking in the rear of the Fire Hall.)

This will be our 76th get-together -- and we hope to see two of our members who were at the first Reunion way back in 1906 and who keep coming back year after year, ESTA BUCH HERR and LORRAINE BROWN NEIKIRK.

(Cont. on page 2)



OVERHOLSER FAMILY ASSOCIATION
BULLETIN

Vol. VII No. 2 August 1985

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413 Appletree Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

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

WHERE TO SEND

GENEALOGICAL QUERIES

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(Note: THE BULLETIN is financed
solely by voluntary contributions
of the members.)

NEWSLETTER ITEMS, NEW MEMBERS, &
CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Jim Kehew, Editor
413 Appletree Road
Camp Hill, PA 17011

FOR BACK ISSUES

J. Spencer Overholser
PO Box 106
Oley, PA 19547

grant Samuel, others started coming until
now the membership is split about evenly
between descendants of Samuel and others.
They are all held together by the common
bond: the name Oberholtzer, with its var-
iant spellings.

- 10:30 Registration
Viewing of charts, books, pictures
Greeting old and new friends
- 12:00 Covered-dish luncheon
(Bring a hot or cold dish for the
smorgasbord table, and your own
drink and tableware.)
Invocation by Chaplain, REV. JOHN
WEILER
- 1:00 Introduction of members and guests
by family line
- 1:15 Socializing, followed by rousing
sing-along led by JIM and MARY
PETTIGREW POWELL
- 2:00 Group photo - DAN PETTIGREW
(Please remain in place after the
picture until we get everyone's
name.)
- 2:15 Program, PRES. J. SPENCER OVERHOL-
SER presiding
Introduction of Officers
Treasurer's Report - MARJORIE
CARROLL
Anecdotal remembrances by older
members
Report of Task Force - JIM KEHEW
Old & New Business
Report of Nominating Committee -
DAYTHAL KENDALL
Election of Officers
Reunion Song - RUTH OVERHOLSER
Benediction - REV. JOHN WEILER
Adjournment

Provision is being made for limited child
care during the meeting.

A LITTLE BACKGROUND ON THE REUNION

It was started in 1906 by the descend-
ants of IV Daniel Overholser. Two of our
present members, ESTA BUCH HERR, our Hon-
orary Vice President, and LORRAINE BROWN
NEIKIRK, attended that first Reunion.

The next year, the descendants of
III Martin were invited. It was a close-
knit group -- everyone knew everyone else.
As time went on, the attendance tended to
narrow down to the descendants of III Mar-
tin, until 1956 when SPENCER OVERHOLSER
was elected President.

Due to his correspondence with descend-
ants of other than III Martin and immi-



WHERE DO OUR MEMBERS LIVE?

Of the total of 433 members of the Association, a majority (264 or 61%) live in 44 states outside Pennsylvania. The states with significant concentrations are Ohio (29), California (22) Kansas (18), New Jersey (16), New York (16), and Maryland (15).

Of the 163 members who live in Pennsylvania, almost three-quarters (116 or 71%) are clustered in four eastern counties: Lancaster (54), Chester (30, Montgomery (19), and Berks (13). The rest are scattered in 20 other counties. We also have 6 members outside the U.S., 3, in Canada and one each in Denmark, Switzerland, and South Africa. We are more than a Pennsylvania organization, we are truly a national and even an international organization!

GETTING STARTED

If you are thinking about getting into family history but don't know how to start, you might want to get the FAMILY HISTORY BOOK: Simplified Method of Keeping Family Records, written by experienced genealogist and OFA member Marion Mizzenko. It's written for the person just getting started in this fascinating pursuit and covers such topics as Laying the Groundwork, Numbering System, Collecting Data, Preparing a Fan Chart, and Publishing Your Family History. It is 23 typewritten pages and includes several sample forms. It is published by the Fretz Family Association, 46 E. Grandview Ave., Sellersville, PA 18960, at \$2.00 postpaid.

GENEALOGICAL QUERY

OBERHOLTZER -- My husband's great-grandfather was JOSEPH OBERHOLTZER, 1st wife of MAGDALENE WANNER, 2nd wife her sister, CATHARINA. Joseph and Catharina's daughter MAGDALENE OBERHOLTZER married MORRIS SCHAEFFER whose daughter MARY C. SCHAEFFER and her husband, CHARLES KANTNER, were my husband Paul's parents. We are seeking the parents of Joseph and his wives. MRS. SHIRLEY KANTNER, RD 1, Box 716, Reading, PA 19607.

LINEAGE CHARTS AVAILABLE

The following lineage charts are available for copying costs (10¢ a page) and a long stamped envelope from the Editor, Jim Kehew, 413 Appletree Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011:

- 1) LINEAGE OF SAMUEL OBERHOLTZER - the first 4 generations of the family of Immigrant Samuel (1 page)
- 2) CHILDREN OF JACOB AND (III) MARIA OBERHOLTZER KILHEFFER (1 page)
- 3) LINEAGE OF III MARTIN/IV JOHN OVERHOLSER (5 pages)
- 4) LINEAGE OF III MARTIN/IV ANNA OBERHOLTZER STIRK (5 pages)
- 5) LINEAGE OF III CHRISTIAN/IV REV. JOHN OBERHOLTZER (1 page)

ANCESTOR HUNTING

By the time you read this, two of our members will have just returned from a 17-day Germanic Genealogy Tour sponsored by the Edelweiss Institute of Nuremberg, Pa., Schuylkill County. MILDRED PETTIGREW and her aunt, LORRAINE NEIKIRK, left June 21 for a bus tour of Holland, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein. Provision was made in the schedule for those participants who wished to consult genealogical archives in 7 locations including the Palatinate, the Black Forest, Baden-Wurtemberg, Nurnberg and Heidelberg. In addition there was a full program of visiting cathedrals, museums and other historic and scenic sites.

HOW TO JOIN

The Association welcomes into membership anyone interested in the Overholser lineage (with all its variant spellings). There are no dues. We depend for financial support on the voluntary contributions of the members, either at the annual meeting in August or by mail to the Treasurer at any time. New members' names should be sent to the Editor, Jim Kehew, 413 Appletree Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011 --- 717/761-3388.

TASK FORCE APPOINTED

At a meeting of the officers of the Association on Apr. 13 at the home of President Spencer Overholser, a letter from Editor Jim Kehew (who was unable to attend) was read in which he suggested several areas he felt needed attention by the officers and members of the Association:

1. The lack of involvement of more than a handful of members in the work and activities of the organization.
2. The lack of an adequate financial base.
3. The lack of clear goals and a coordinated plan of operation.

Much discussion ensued, resulting in agreement that a Task Force be established to begin to collect ideas prior to the Reunion.

Suiting action to thought, Pres. Overholser subsequently appointed the following members to the Task Force and called a meeting for June 8 at his home: CHUCK CARROLL of North Hills, JOHN OSWALD of Conshohocken, MILDRED PETTIGREW of Pottstown, ROBERT WENGER of Ephrata, DAYTHAL KENDALL of Glenside, ERNEST WEINHOLD of Manheim, CATHY BROWN of Langhorne, and JIM KEHEW of Camp Hill, all of Pennsylvania. He declined to chair the group, preferring to serve ex officio, and suggested that Jim serve in that capacity.

At the June 8 meeting, a beginning was made on attacking the problems discussed by the officers. Many ideas were presented and the group decided that more meetings will be needed to give adequate consideration to the issues. A sense of urgency was introduced when Spencer said that if he is re-elected President at the Reunion, it will definitely be his last term, having served 30 years in the office at that time, longer by far than any of his four predecessors. Since he does more work than anyone else in overseeing the running of the organization, answering over 200 requests and genealogical queries each year, compiling a master card file on the vast Overholser family, besides conducting research on his own, it devolved upon the Task Force to make plans for this work to continue when he retires as president.

Items discussed included interesting more

younger people in the Association by perhaps having child care at the Reunions; encouraging members from a distance to attend by providing a map to Terre Hill and information on tourist attractions, motels and restaurants in the area; having more entertainment in the Reunion programs and condensing the routine business; creating a Corresponding secretary position to answer routine mail and refer the rest to knowledgeable officers and members; extending terms of officers to 2 years with the option of a second term; and creating committees to handle specific parts of the Association's activities (such as Reunion, Research, Financial, Publication, Membership, etc.). Attempts to get other ideas will be made by contacting similar associations and during the business meeting at the Reunion.

Any member willing to help in this task of renewal or who has good ideas or techniques to suggest is invited to contact the Chairman of the Task Force, Jim Kehew at 413 Appletree Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011, 717/761-3388. This includes members anywhere in the country as much can be accomplished by correspondence.

OBERHOLTZER-NASH BOOK NOW AVAILABLE

The Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society of Scottdale has recently reprinted OBERHOLTZER AND NASH FAMILY HISTORIES by Rev. A. J. Fretz, first published in 1903 and long out of print. The handsome 342-page hardbound limited edition is a genealogical record of the descendants of Martin Oberholtzer and William Nash of Bucks County and contains all of the photographs, drawings, and biographical sketches of the original. Among the families mentioned are Fretz, Funk, Loucks, McGriffin, Meyer, Mumma, Overholser, Overholt, Rosenberger, Shupe, Stoner, Tinstman, Tyson and many more. An index of names makes it easy to trace ancestry.

It is hoped there will be a quantity of the books at our Aug. 24 Reunion. The price is \$20.00. However, it is available by mail from the Westmoreland-Fayette Historical Society, West Overton, Scottdale, PA 15683 for \$20.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling.

A LIST OF EVERYONE WHO HAS EVER LIVED!

The Mormon Church has been microfilming its vast genealogical records worldwide since 1938. With over a billion names in its files, the church is unwavering in its intentions of some day storing data on everyone who's ever lived! If the Mormons don't already have some inkling of your existence, they most certainly will have a record of your parents, grandparents, or perhaps a distant cousin.

The records are kept in several places, the most impressive being the Granite Mountain Vaults, a huge repository 700 feet under the Rocky Mountains just outside of Salt Lake City. The vaults are a virtually impregnable series of tunnels with massive galvanized-steel bank doors that lead to a natural reservoir fed by an underground spring. The reservoir is used for developing 100-foot rolls of microfilm, processing some 60,000 rolls every year. The six tunnels already carved into the mountain will eventually hold 6 billion names and additional tunnels can be blasted at any time.

The church maintains identical records in the world's largest and fastest-growing genealogical library, located in a 28-story ultramodern office complex in the heart of Salt Lake City. Both church members and nonmembers are invited to explore their

links to the past. The library holds over 200,000 volumes of genealogical research and 900 volumes are added each month. Some 870,000 rolls of microfilm (each roll bearing approximately 1200 pages of text) and 400 microfilm machines are available to the public and the more than 500 international branch libraries supported by the church.

The records come from mass microfilming expeditions sent out to scour records in more than 44 countries. Once microfilmed, the records are sent to the Vaults for processing and then permanently stored in the mountain, where they are safe from most acts of God or man. Vault doors can seal automatically in case of a catastrophe and should withstand a nuclear war, much less floods and earthquakes.

One of the branch libraries is located in Reading and is open, with no fee, to the general public. It contains reels of Berks County church and cemetery records, poor-house birth and death records, probate records, U.S. census microfilms, and much more. Through inter-library loan, users have access to the main library's microfilm collection. The library is located at 3344 Reading Crest Ave. and is open Wed. and Thurs. from 10 AM to 9 PM and from 9 to 3 on Saturday.

NEW MEMBERS

We extend a warm welcome to the following who have joined our family circle:

MRS. GERTRUDE W. HAINES	407 Brooks Ave., Bordentown, NJ 08505
SHIRLEY KANTNER	RD 1, Box 716, Reading, PA 19607
C. J. KURTZ	RD 3, Box 49, Elverson, PA 19520
MILDRED O. POLEY	207 W. Summit St., Apt A324, Souderton, PA 18964
DR. DOUGLAS OVERHOLT RALEIGH	22460 Venido Road, Woodland Hills, CA 91364
MRS. DAVID V. STEVENS	565 Covington Place, Pasadena, CA 91105
DAVID OVERHOLT STEVENS	13814 Pebblebrook, Houston, TX 77079
LAWRENCE J. STEVENS	704 W. Sierra Madre Blvd. #16, Sierra Madre, CA 91024
PAUL W. STEVENS	c/o General Delivery, South Lake Tahoe, CA 95705
ROBERT H. STEVENS II	2749 S. Nansemond Drive, Suffolk, VA 23435

A GUIDE TO THE GENEALOGY/LOCAL HISTORY SECTION OF THE STATE LIBRARY OF PENNSYLVANIA is the name of a new publication available free from the Pa. State Library. The 64-page 8½x11 publication gives much valuable information about what is available in the Library and how to use it. For example, a list of over 250 periodicals (including this one) on genealogy/local history that the Library gets, research aids in the Pennsylvania Archives, a bibliography of name books in the Library, and how-to-do-it sections on tracing your family tree. For a copy write to the State Library of Pa., Box 1601, Harrisburg, PA 17105.

Looking Back

THE 13th ANNUAL O.F.A. REUNION, 1918

The thirteenth annual reunion of the Overholser was held at Band Hall Park, Terre Hill, Thursday, Aug. 1, 1918. Relatives and friends began arriving in the early forenoon. The day was perfect. Although the war cast a shadow over everyone, we all had a pleasant social time. The program began promptly at 2 o'clock.

Hymn: "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"

Prayer: Rev. William Overholser of Myerstown

Song: "America"

Address of the President: Mr. M. L. Overholser

Words of Welcome: Mr. Edwin L. Watts of Myerstown

Song: "Auld Lang Syne" - everyone shook hands with his neighbor

Song: "Battle Hymn of the Republic"

Report of Memorial Committee: Mrs. C. E. Barr

Song: "Friends We Love"

Paper on current events: Mrs. Marguerite Vincent, East Orange, N.J.

Song: "We'll Never Let the Old Flag Fall", Mrs. Samuel Watts, Curwensville, Pa.

Song: "Keep the Home Fires Burning", Paul Horst, Lebanon

Minutes and Treasurer's Report read and approved

Election of officers: The same officers were elected with Dr. G. W. Overholser as Vice President

Address: Mr. Samuel Watts, Curwensville, Pa.

Duet: Paul Horst and Edwin Overholser

Recitation: Margaret Overholser

Song: "The Sunshine of Your Smile", Paul Horst

Recitation, "Mammy's Little Baby Boy", Miriam Stauffer

Address: Edwin Overholser, Boston, Mass.

Song: "Laddie in Khaki", Mrs. Beulah Powell

Song: "Brighten the Corner"

Benediction: Rev. Seip

Anna M. Overholser, Sec.

Man has five senses: touch, taste, sight, smell and hearing. The successful man has two more: horse and common.

NUMERICAL DESIGNATIONS

To differentiate among generations and to simplify references to members of the lineage of "Immigrant" Samuel Oberholtzer, the Association has adopted a system of numerical designations.

Although the Association welcomes into membership any Overholser (including all variant spellings), most members trace their lineage from Samuel, who came to America in 1727, and is designated I Samuel. The second generation consists of his 6 children, designated as II Jacob, II Martin, etc.

The most completely developed lines in the 3rd generation are the 8 children of II Martin with those of his sons, III Christian, III Samuel, and III Martin developed most fully into the 4th generation. Subsequent generations are marked accordingly.

A chart depicting the first four generations as presently known, compiled by Pres. Spencer Overholser, is available by writing to the Editor, Jim Kehew, 413 Appletree Road, Camp Hill, PA 17011, and enclosing a long stamped addressed envelope.

THANK YOU!

We appreciate the contributions in support of the Association made by the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| MRS. GEORGE ERNSBARGER | Colorado Spr, CO |
| MRS. SHIRLEY KANTNER | Reading, PA |
| MRS. N. G. LOUTROULIS | Spring, Texas |
| ROBERT MCKINLEY | Pleasant Hill, TN |
| JOEL OBERHOLSER | Ft. Benton, Mont. |
| MR/MRS HENRY OBERHOLTZER | Summitville, IN |
| REV. J. E. OVERHOLSER | Bradford, Ohio |
| MILDRED POLEY | Souderton, PA |
| LAWRENCE RICHMOND | Oley, PA |
| SARAH ANN STAUFFER | Rohrerstown, PA |
| ROBERT STEVENS II | Suffolk, VA |

Grandparents and children understand each other because they know how to outwit the generation between them.

LETTER TO EDITOR FROM OUR
FARTHEST FAR SOUTH MEMBER

What a pleasant surprise it was to see my name among those of the new members of the Overholser Family Association in the Feb. 1985 issue of the BULLETIN. My sincerest thanks to those responsible and for the opportunity to get in touch with distant relatives.

I am called Hannes (pronounced Hahnis) and my full names are Johannes Jacobus Oberholzer. I am a descendant of Johann (Hans) Oberholzer who was born in 1680 in or near Oberholz, near Wald in Switzerland. He came to South Africa in 1680 at the age of 16 as a member of a contingent of soldiers sent to the Cape by the Dutch East India Company. At that stage of affairs, the Hollanders owned the southern tip of Africa where they had established a halfway supply station for ships en route to India, in 1652. One wonders what his motivation was and why he joined the Dutch. Could he have been a mercenary?

The fact that this old grandpappy of ours arrived here in 1696 and married one Helena du Toit (daughter of a French Huguenot) makes the Oberholzers one of the oldest South African families. As far as can be ascertained, three children were born out of this marriage, namely two sons, Guillaume and Johannes, and one daughter, Johanna Barbara.

My line stems from the second son, Johannes. Old grandpappy Johann apparently had another son, also named Johannes (or Jan), from a relationship with one Agnita Colyn to whom he was not married. It is not clear when grandma Helena disappeared from the scene or what happened to Agnita but we do know that he married Judith du Plessis and that they had five children.

Although my late father (Christiaan Lawrens) undertook some research on our branch of the family, a lot remains to be done. It is a well-known fact that some of the Oberholzer ancestors participated in the Great Trek which took place during 1835-1837. This northwards movement of thousands of border farmers was the result of dissatisfaction with British rule. (The

Cape was formally given to Britain in 1814 after the Napoleonic wars). A great-grandfather, also named Johannes Jacobus Oberholzer (born on 10 March 1811), who was married to Maria Elizabeth Carolina Krugel, trekked to the Western Transvaal and settled on the farm Wonderfontein. Some of the richest gold mines in South Africa are now situated on and around Wonderfontein and the town of Oberholzer which adjoins it, was named in honour of the family. Unfortunately the family received hardly any financial compensation when the rights to mine for gold on the property were sold.

My grandfather (Johannes Jacobus) was a son of Carel Krugel Oberholzer who was the seventh child of the Johannes Jacobus who settled at Wonderfontein.

There are numerous Oberholzers in South Africa today and all of them are of Afrikaner stock and Afrikaans speaking. The name is mainly spelled Oberholzer (without the "t"), and Oberholster. The latter group are jokingly referred to as the horse thieves! I have not yet seen the derivations Overholt, Overhuls, Overhultz or Overholser locally.

Apart from being interested in my immediate ancestors, I am also interested in the ancestors of the human race. As director of the largest general museum in South Africa in which the famous fossil skull of Florisbadman (an early Homo sapiens) is housed, I was invited to New York by the American Museum of Natural History in April 1984 while the skull was on display there as part of the "Ancestors" exhibition. Later my wife Georjane and I travelled across the States and visited some of the best American museums. This was part of a grand 3½ month study tour which started in Israel and ended in Canada and which took us to 11 countries. The tour formed a major part of the research for a doctoral thesis which is now nearing completion - I hope!

While in Switzerland we also visited the original stamping ground of the family at Oberholz. Although the Gasthaus was closed and we did not meet any Oberholzers, the visit remains a memorable experience.

(Cont. on page 8)

OFFICERS

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FAR SOUTH LETTER (Cont)

At the time of our previous visits to the U S A we unfortunately did not know of the existence of the O F A. We do hope, however, that there will be another opportunity to visit the States and to attend a family reunion. Meanwhile we wish to extend an open invitation to all members of the American family to visit with us if and when they come to this part of the world.

I am very interested in the original Oberholtzer family. Has anything been published on the early genealogy of the family, their way of life and their reasons for leaving Switzerland for America and South Africa?

Greetings from the far south,
 HANNES OBERHOLZER, Director
 National Museum
 Bloemfontein, South Africa

If Patrick Henry thought taxation without representation was bad, he should see it WITH representation.

You're middle aged if you remember when there was no parking problem around the high school.

Overholser Family Association

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