



Published semi-annually by the Overholser Family Association

August 1995

ISSN 0742-8472

Vol. XVII No.2

86TH OVERHOLSER FAMILY ASSOCIATION REUNION

The President's Column

With the deterioration of the family unit and with the ever increasing divorce rates and single parent households, our roots and sense of belonging become so important. As a retired Realtor, we were aware that the average American family moves about every six years. Since women now play an important role in the work place, a woman as well as a man are transferred by their company to another part of the country. Today's children know their cousins only as voices on a telephone. We, as parents and grandparents, have the responsibility to instill in our children and grandchildren this sense of belonging. Family gatherings and reunions reinforce this.

In the February 1986 BULLETIN, Spencer Overholser, our president at that time, asked members to send in anecdotes about their ancestors. I too would like to ask you to send in your stories or little tidbits that could be printed in the BULLETIN. At the first Reunion in 1906, an account was read about John Overholser, great grandson of 1727 Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer. Let's make it a tradition. I'm sure there are hundreds of stories or little tidbits that would be interesting reading.

I hope to see you at the Reunion

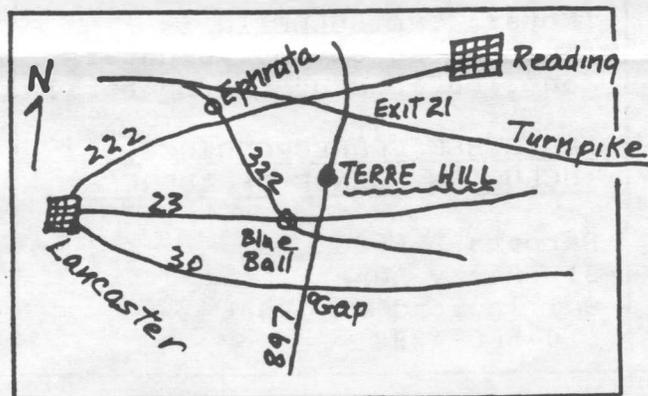
Saturday, August 19th at the Terre Hill Fire Hall, Terre Hill PA which starts at 10:30. We will have a covered-dish lunch at noon. Please bring a hot or cold dish for the buffet table. If you are traveling a distance, we will furnish the food, etc. After the Reunion picture is taken, we will have a brief business meeting with reports by the secretary, necrologist, treasurer and the book committee.

Parents of small children are reminded that there is a community playground just below the Fire Hall that their off-spring might enjoy.

Darwin Overholt

Marcus Oberholtzer line

(Ed.-See Darwin's Human Interest Story on page 7)



See specific directions on page 10

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ASSOCIATION ARE NOT ONLY APPRECIATED BUT NEEDED TO HELP WITH THE COST OF PRINTING AND MAILING THE BULLETIN. HAVE YOU SENT YOUR CONTRIBUTION FOR 1995?

OVERHOLSER FAMILY
ASSOCIATION BULLETIN

Vol. XVII No.2 August 1995

Editor - Barbara B Ford
313 Henry Lane
Wallingford, PA 19086

Copyright © 1995 The Over-
holser Family Association,
313 Henry La, Wallingford PA
19086

If for any reason, you do not
wish to receive the BULLETIN,
please let us know.

WHERE TO SEND

BIRTHS, DEATHS, MARRIAGES

Rev John R Weiler
Necrologist
325 Carver Drive
Bethlehem PA 18017

CONTRIBUTIONS

Richard I Stevens Sr
Treasurer
224 Swarthmore Drive
Lititz PA 17543

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

ALL OTHER CORRESPONDENCE,
INCLUDING CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Barbara B Ford
313 Henry Lane
Wallingford PA 19086
610-566-4888

HELP FROM THE COMPUTER

New member Fred Overholt of Buffalo
Grove IL heard about the Association
from Paul Calhoun of Port Clinton OH on
the Internet.

I recently heard from Pierre Oberhol-
zer of Versoix, Switzerland who is cur-
rently working on his family tree. He
was aided by Michel Platt of Montreal,
Canada on the Genealogy Forum, on
CompuServe.

CORRECTION

In the February 1995 BULLETIN, I mis-
spelled a new member's name. The correct
spelling is Ella M Rydzewski.

DISTANT COUSINS

New member Bruce T Ferguson of Owens-
boro KY is from the Abraham Overholts of
Franklin Co VA line (AV). His ancestor
Nancy Overhuls (AV62) married John Gish.
Bruce was interested in hearing that
another member Ann Duke, whose ancestor
is Daniel Overhuls (AV63), also lives in
Owensboro.

NECROLOGIST'S REPORT

DEATHS

Samuel Reeser Skiles 1/10/1903-8/28/1994,
grandson of Caroline Oberholser Reeser.
He faithfully attended the Reunion until
the last few years.

(IV Christian Oberholser & Susanna Kurtz)

Elam A Enoch 6/8/1908-1/6/1995
(IV John Overholser & Margaret Kurtz)

James M Overhuls, formerly of Norwalk OH,
died 2/28/1995 in Xenia OH
(Jacob Oberholtzer of Brecknock,
Lancaster Co)

John R Weiler, Necrologist

The Bucks County Genealogical Society will have its Family
Ancestry Fair September 23-24 at the Delavare Valley College.
Contact: Bucks County Genealogical Society, PO Box 1092,
Doylestown PA 18901

The Fretz Family Association Reunion will be held
8/12/1995 at the Deep Run Mennonite Church-West, Bedminster
PA at 10:00

BOOK PROGRESS REPORT

I am extremely pleased to report the successful conclusion of our family history book publishing efforts. At our Reunion in August '94, we received a number of book orders and several major contributions which put us over our initial \$10,000 funding objective and allowed us to release the book for printing. This amount included \$4055 in loans.

Those who have made loans/contributions since the last BULLETIN:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Carol C Boyer | Paul H Overholser |
| Robert/Mildred Broka | Spencer/Ruth Overholser |
| Caroline O Kendall | Will Overholtzer |
| Vivian B Lewis | Ella M Rydzewski |
| Myrtle O Mento | Eugene A Singer |
| Eva M Nolt | Ralph W Smith |
| Charles/Renee Overholser | Homer Thiel |

Matilda C Zackey

750 copies of THE OBERHOLTZER BOOK were received from the printer on schedule in February and have been distributed to all who have placed orders. The 424 page hard-cover book, with every name index, is of excellent quality and will undoubtedly be a prized collector's item and reference for future generations.

Since August '94, we have received additional orders and contributions of approximately \$4200. This means we have now achieved our secondary goal, and will be able to repay the \$4055 in loans.

So, thanks to all who have helped us accomplish our objectives. Thanks to our Editor, Publisher and Printer. Thanks to all who made contributions and loans. Thanks to all who placed pre-publication book orders and to all who served on the book publishing committee. It has been a great team effort. I salute you all and say: "Well Done".

Will Overholtzer
Chairman, Book Publishing Committee

THE OBERHOLTZER BOOK ORDER FORM

From: Name _____

Address _____

To: Overholser Family Association
c/o Barbara Ford, 313 Henry Lane, Wallingford PA 19086

Book Quantity _____ X \$29.50 \$ _____

PA Residents, add 6% Sales Tax (\$1.77 per book) \$ _____

Shipping & Handling \$3.50 \$ _____

Total \$ _____

A FINAL REPORT ON THE BOOK

The books arrived February 8th on a tractor trailer and I was told I was responsible for getting them off the truck and into the house. Having recovered from my broken leg, I didn't relish a broken back so I paid an additional charge to have them put inside my front door. I immediately got to work and in 2 1/2 weeks I had mailed 200 books. The customers in my very small Post Office were not pleased when I would bring in 15-20 books at a time to mail. I would like to thank all the people who wrote to me about the book. I especially appreciated the card from Dwight Overholser of North Manchester IN.

The only order I turned down for the book was a resident of a nursing home where I volunteer. She wanted to buy a copy although she had no Oberholtzer connection. After I advised her against it, she asked for my autograph!

Two abstracts from the book were in recent publications. *MENNONITE FAMILY HISTORY*, April 1995 had "Immigrant Marcus Oberholtzer of Chester County PA" and *JOURNAL OF THE BERKS COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY*, Spring 1995 had "Jacob Oberholtzer of Berks County PA".

With "time on my hands", I have stopped having TV dinners (Stouffers profits have dropped considerably) and I have spent days outside pruning everything in sight with my handy saw and clippers. This has also given me time to check the records on my father's family (my maternal grandmother had the Overholt connection) and I found his grandparents coming over in the 1830's from Germany.

The codes I used in the book appear in this BULLETIN to help those who have bought the book identify the various lines.

For those who plan to attend the Reunion and haven't purchased THE OBERHOLTZER BOOK, we will have it for sale on August 19th.

We will also have copies of THE OBERHOLTZER FAMILY HISTORY 1802-1968 by Levi N & Lizzie B Oberholtzer. Their son Leroy is selling them for \$3. He has corrected the line of descent (page 3) from 1727 Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer down to Samuel 1802-1875.

UPDATE

In the August 1994 BULLETIN pages 5-6, there was an article about John Overholser c1764-1842 Montgomery Co OH. Bruce McCrea has found evidence that John Overholser (JM) married Susannah Snyder, d/o Jacob Snyder. He has a copy of the estate settlement (9/25/1805) of Jacob Snyder, Berkeley Co (West) Virginia with a list of those who received money from the estate and John Overholser was listed as receiving &22. Sons William, George & David Snyder received &32 and 3 sons-in-law received &31, &23 & &32. Jacob Snyder had land in Virginia and Bedford Co, Pennsylvania. For many years, it was believed that Susannah's maiden name was Stutzman.
REF: Will Book 4/54, 1790 Berkeley Co, Martinsburg WV

EARLY OBERHOLTZERS IN SWITZERLAND

The Oberholtzer family takes its name from the hamlet of Oberholz, which belongs to the township of Goldingen, S.G.

The name of the homestead Oberholz was first officially cited in a document of 1438. It is a definition of the location of the farm in "Oberrn Holz", the high-lying woods. The document states that in 1390 a "Gult" or deventure of 1380 quarts of oats annually was sold by the homestead of Oberholz.

The folk from Oberholz belonged to the parish of Wald, Canton Zurich. In 1438 at their general meeting, the members of the Swiss confederation had to deal with the problem of a certain Farmer Oberholzer who did not want to submit to the government of Zurich, since he had fought for and sworn to the common laws of canton Schwyz. Farmer Oberholzer, obviously a very rich man, whom the Zurchers had captured and put in a tower, was fined 200 pounds, the value of more than 400 swine. His wealth and patently also his self-confident personality, lead the Schwyzers and Zurchers to fighting about the division of his property. Nothing is known about the outcome of this quarrel. Later, after the civil war between the Schwyz and Zurich (for quite other reasons) the homestead of Oberholz was apportioned to the shire of Uznach.

The Oberholtzers who belonged to the parish church of Wald in Canton Zurich were, in 1523, according to the decision of the council of the City of Zurich, assigned to the reformed belief of Ulrich Zwingli. The Oberholtzers who then lived in the townships of Uznach and Godingen stayed fast with the old catholic faith.

A word-of-mouth legend has it that as a result of a time of plague, the family died out to two brothers. Of these, one chose to go to the parish of Wald, as a protestant, the other to the catholic parish of Eschenbach. The two got into such a hot dispute about religion that they began to fight. They beat up each other so brutally that the brook on the path to church was red with blood. That brook is called Rotwasser to this day.

The baptismal records of the church in Wald, which begin in 1559, record in the first four years as many as six protestant families named Oberholtzer. These entries show that at the time of the Reformation there must have been more than only two Oberholzer family-fathers. Proof enough that the foregoing story is indeed only a legend.

The folk who remained at the Oberholz homestead, remained faithful to the catholic church as well, and belonged "Brut und Bahr", cradle and bier, to the parish of Eschenbach, Canton St Gallen. If someone died, his corpse was taken by a long-round-about way to Eschenbach for burial. The direct way, shorter but partly across protestant territory was shunned, so that those who accompanied the train as praying mourners "could be on catholic ground at all times and pray as loudly and clearly as possible."

About 1611 another plague broke out, of which type it is

now impossible to determine. On the Oberholzer homestead alone, 6 adults and 14 children died. An enormous number of fatalities for so tiny a hamlet.

In 1621, the first "mixed marriage" took place in Eschenbach. Adam Oberholzer married a protestant girl from Ruti, in the country around Zurich, named Cleopha Honeggerin. The catholic priest wrote in the church record against the name of Adam, "Nullius est dignus". In spite of the mixed marriage and the forementioned futility, out of this family strain came the first Oberholzer to become a catholic priest.

In 1667, Goldingen St Gallen got its own chapel, and was named a catholic parish. We find many entries of marriages, christenings and deaths of the Oberholzer family. Many pious bequests for parish and church are mentioned.

At this time, many protestant families of Oberholzer appeared in the records of the Canton of Zurich. The catholic Oberholzers were in Canton St Gallen, in the townships of Goldingen, Uznach, etc.

Although the forefathers came from a great farm, the descendants often settled in towns and cities.

There exists a brochure in German about the family: Die Familie der Oberholzer. It was published by the printing firm of Oberholzer Brothers, Uznach, St Gallen.

Ref: "Copied from information which was given to John Overholser by a Swiss businessman he met at Rotary."

Ed.-This paper, from the OFA files, was found in the Abraham Overholts (AV) folder and was not dated. This John Overholser could possibly be the one from Cottage Grove, Oregon who contributed to the Overholser research many years ago.

Rosy Oberholzer, one of our members, and her family operate the Gasthaus Kantonsgrenze (Guest House) on the Canton Border in the tiny town of Oberholz, 25 miles east of Zurich near the town of Wald. Rosy has many friends in the Association who have visited her from time to time. Her daughter Johanna and her son visited Darwin and Jean Overholt in Doylestown about two years ago.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Robert/Mildred Broka
Bowling Green OH
Bruce T Ferguson
Owensboro KY
Ross Gordon Gerhart III
Ambler PA
Leroy W Oberholtzer
Memphis MO
Fred Overholt
Buffalo Grove IL

A HUMAN INTEREST STORY
Darwin Overholt, Doylestown PA

As was the custom many years ago, my great grandfather on my Mother's side wrote a letter of proposal to a Mary Shelly who lived in Bedminster Twp, Bucks Co PA. My great grandfather Edward Schmell knew her from church and felt she would be an excellent wife. Unfortunately, there was another Mary Shelly living in Bedminster Twp. Yes, you guessed it, the mailman delivered it to the wrong Mary Shelly who immediately accepted his proposal. Being a man of his word, he married her and they had 2 sons. One was my grandfather, Samuel Schmell. After they were married about 7 or 8 years, Mary died of TB. Fortunatley, the original Mary Shelly was still available. This time the mailman got it right and yes, they were married and had 4 children. Edward Schmell, with a Mary on each side is buried in the Deep Run Mennonite Cemetery-East, Bedminster Twp, Bucks County.

(Ed.-Mary Shelly #1 was the grand daughter of John Leatherman and Maria Overholt (MT316). Darwin and my husband had the same 4th great grandfather, Michael Shelly. I am also related to Darwin through Immigrant Hans Meyer of Philadelphia Co (now Montgomery Co) who died 1748. It is a small world since I was born and raised in Pittsburgh.)

THANKS TO THE BOOK, A PROBLEM IS SOLVED

For many years, Bob and Lois Overholt of Spencerville OH have been trying to find the parents of his gt gt grandfather Henry Overholt (HO) whom they had found in Licking Co OH. A connection to the Bucks Co Overholts was ruled out and it seemed almost hopeless until the book came out. In looking through the book, Jan Everly Williams of Kaneohe HI noticed Henry Overholt (HO) and she saw a possible connection to her Henry Overholt (MV1). About the same time, Bob and Lois Overholt noticed a similar link. After comparing notes, they feel that the mystery has been solved and that the two Henrys are the same person. Not only did Bob find that Henry was the s/o Marcus Oberholtzer of Rockingham Co VA, he found the marriage of Henry to Sally Sprinkle. I am excited for the Overholts and so glad that Jan has found where Henry went from Virginia and that now she can add to her family line.

QUERY

I am still seeking the parents of Mathias Burchfield, husband of Barbara Overholt, d/o Martin Overholt and Esther Fretz. I believe Mathias and Barbara were married ca 1796 in Westmoreland Co PA. He died 3/16/1822 in Tuscarawas Co OH. Will Peadon, 4151 S Ridge West, Ashtabula OH 44004

ANOTHER HOAX!

About 4 years ago, Jo Ann Kester of Tipp City OH wrote that in 1921 her mother had received a letter from a cousin stating that a 99 year lease on the land where the Wanamaker Building stands in Philadelphia was coming due and they were looking for the Baker heirs. Jo was searching her Baker relatives (Jonathan Overholtz (AV231) m Frances Baker) so I decided to see what I could find on the Wanamaker property. I wasn't successful in finding any information for her and forgot about it until she sent a very interesting solution to her problem. She joined the Baker Association and found that the 99 year old lease was a hoax! It seems that in the late 1800's a group of businessmen placed ads in newspapers asking Bakers everywhere to file for a Pennsylvania estate. They asked for proof showing their family lived in Pennsylvania or was related to one Jacob Baker. The response was overwhelming and the Heirs' Association required various sums of money from each Baker several times a year. Many Baker heirs spent their savings tracing their family and paying attorney fees so beware when you hear that you might be heir to an estate!

HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Spencer Overholser received a letter from Halbert's of Bath OH about a book "THE WORLD BOOK OF OVERHOLSEERS" for \$34.50. They say the first Overholser they found came to Philadelphia 1727 and his name was Jonathan! Isn't it interesting that the original immigrants we found were Oberholtzers. The letter says "It includes Overholsters who immigrated to the New World between the 16th and early 20th century". The 16th century is the 1500's and yet they found the first one in 1727!

In the May-June 1995 Genealogical Helper, there is an article from The Federation of Genealogical Societies. "On March 23, 1995 the National Genealogical Society in cooperation with the Federation of Genealogical Societies filed a formal request with The US Postal Service to investigate Halbert's for misrepresentation of its products. If you have received a letter offering a genealogical product that appears misleading, you should replace the material in its original envelope and mail it with your comments to Mr Kenneth J Hunter, Chief Postal Inspector, The US Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Washington DC 20260-2100." (Ed.-I mailed Spencer's letter to Mr Hunter with my comments on how the Association felt about Halbert's book.)

1727 Immigrant Samuel Oberholtzer (SL)

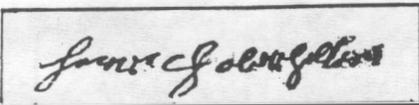
Daniel L Overholser (SL2783) b 12/9/1835, s/o Isaac and Mary (Landis) Overholser, was nominated for governor of Indiana on the Prohibition ticket many years ago.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Our deep thanks to the members who have contributed to the OFA from January 1st to June 10, 1995. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Dr John/Margaret Arnold
White Bear Lake MN
Barbara A Benson
Wyoming MI
Claud/Eleanor Bray
Bull Shoals AR
Juanita Brown
Cookeville TN
James/Margaret Campbell
Edmond OK
Fred/Betty Cook
Grosse Pointe MI
Ann Duke
Owensboro KY
Col/Mrs Charles Elliott
Sacramento CA
Bruce T Ferguson
Owensboro KY
Eldon/Sue Field
Zionsville IN
Harry/Anne Foote
Portland ME
Alice J Henderson
Bradfordwoods PA
Mary A Kurila
Madison OH
Vivian B Lewis
Grosse Ile MI
C Dorothy McLean
Feasterville PA

Ronnie/Beverly Molstad
Miles City MT
Paul/Barbara Munson
Cambria CA
Stanley W Nash
Vancouver B.C. Canada
Henry/Ruth Oberholtzer
Summitville IN
Leroy/Miriam Oberholtzer
Memphis MO
William/Helen Oberholtzer
Bethlehem PA
Gwen Overholt
Ontario Canada
Fred/Suzanne Overholt
Buffalo Grove IL
Robert W Peadon
Ashtabula OH
Mildred O Poley
Souderton PA
JoAnne/Alfred Reiter
Camp Hill PA
James/Ruth Runyon
Reading PA
Ella M Rydzewski
Clarkeville MD
Janice Sanford
Omaha NE
Virgie Walker
Wilmington OH



Signature of Henry Oberholtzer (MC72), s/o Martin Oberholtzer 1709-1744 Bucks Co PA. Henry was one of the executors of the estate of Jacob Beidler of Hilltown. The following was written on a deed-"Feb 6th 1797. Henry Overholtz one of the Mortgagees in the adjoining Indenture named acknowledges full satisfaction of all monies due them on both Principal & Interest."

Inscription Alverton Cemetery, Westmoreland Co PA
Hier/Ruhen die/Gubene/von/Henrich Oberholtzer/ward geborenden 5th Feb/1739/Old Stile/Er ist gestorben Den 5ter/Martius 1813/Sein alter war 74 jahr/1 m. und 7 tag/

OFFICERS

President Darwin Overholt, 4129 Swamp Road
Doylestown PA 18901
1st Vice President Willard Overholtzer, 2440 El Pavo Way
Rancho Cordova CA 95670
2nd Vice President D Ernest Weinhold, 107 W Sunhill Road
Manheim PA 17545
Recording Secretary Darlene O Redcay, 1613 E Main St, Box 38
Goodville PA 17528
Treasurer Richard Stevens, 224 Swarthmore Drive
Lititz, PA 17543
President Emeritus Spencer Overholser, 58 Downing Drive
Wyomissing PA 19610
Chaplain, Rev John R. Weiler, 325 Carver Drive
Necrologist Bethlehem, PA 18017
Genealogist, Editor Barbara B Ford, 313 Henry Lane
Wallingford, PA 19086

HOW TO GET TO THE REUNION

Terre Hill is a town of 1,200 located in the Pennsylvania Dutch country of Lancaster County, midway between Lancaster and Reading. The Fire Hall is on the main street, with plenty of parking at the rear.

From Lancaster: 15 mi NE via Rts 222, 23, 897

From Reading: 15 mi SW via Rts 222, 897

From Gap on Rt 30: 15 mi N via Rt 897

From Exit 21 (Reading), PA Turnpike: 5 mi S via Rt 897

Many motels are in the area with Ephrata and New Holland nearby.

Overholser Family Assortation
313 Henry La
Wallingford PA 19086

BULK RATE
U.S. Postage
PAID
Camp Hill, PA
Permit #101

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

