



OFA Bulletin

Published Semi-annually by the Overholser Family Association
 Winter 2023 ISSN 0742-8472 Vol. XXXXII No. 1

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

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings OFA Members,

What a mess this last two years of COVID Pandemic has turned out to be! The disruption of our living patterns has forced us to reevaluate our priorities. Getting back into a "normal" reunion pattern can prove challenging. We are working towards restoring our old format of Yoder's dinner on Friday night and St John's on Saturday for luncheon and business meeting. We recommend that members could ease back into the old habits of attendance in the first week of August. I would like to see us take the chance and get back face to face. I would like to see us rekindle our archival conversation and find a way to have a closer relationship with the other Pennsylvania German family associations that compete to reunion time in the summer. Our association is very vital and I request you all stay tuned for news on our reunion plans.

At this year's Reunion, Dennis Oberholtzer will be speaking on **the ties between the Oberholzer, Hans Herr and Lottscher** families from the Crusader Years to the 15th century during the Old Zurich War.

Yours Truly,

Michael Martin

President- Overholser Family Association

**Overholser Family
Association Bulletin**
Vol. XXXXII No 1 Winter 2023

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49 Paradise Lane, Paradise, PA 17562
ISSN 0742-8472

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Welcome New OFA Members!!!

New Way to CONTRIBUTE!

You can support the OFA by visiting our website
at www.overholser.net and clicking the Donate button.

We have PayPal for your convenience. Please e-mail
gmartin@overholser.net if you have any questions.

*The Wisdom of History is the ability to use history to make decisions in the present and
to plan for the future.*
- J Rufus Fears

If we do not learn from History, history will repeat itself.

Oberholzers Go For Music

- Story of Switzerland, Lina Hug & Richard Stead, 1890 G P Putnam, pages 152-153,
and adapted by Dennis L Oberholtzer

During the Hohenstaufen Epoch of the High Middle Ages, social and political movements were full of the spirit of romanticism. The English and French met the Germans in the Crusades, and quickened the love of poetry and romance in the Fatherland. Then the great religious wars themselves opened out a whole new world of thought and fancy. The glorification of the brilliant exploits of the Hohenstaufen sovereigns, themselves being poets, inspired many a grand or lovely song, the highest flights producing the *Nibelungen* and the *Minnelieder*. In Swiss lands minstrelsy also flowed richly, and Zurich stands out as a "poets corner" in the thirteenth century.

At the hospitable manor of Roger Manese, a famous knight and magistrate of Zurich, or at the great Abbey Hall, a brilliant company of singers clustered round the Princess Abbess Elizabeth, an eminent woman, and her relatives, the Prince Bishop of Constance, Henry of Lingenberg, and his brother Albrecht, the famous chevalier.

Then the Prince Abbots of Einsiedeln, and the abbots of Petershausen (Constance), the counts of Toggenburg, the barons of Regensberg, of Eschenbach, and Von Wart, together with many other lords, spiritual and temporal, and many a fair and illustrious lady - all these thronged the courtly circle to listen to the recital of the *Minnelieder*, or perchance to produce their own.

It is without doubt the Oberholzer family were recipients of this wondrous awakening to song! They certainly went to Eschenbach as years went by. They were descendants of the Counts of Toggenberg. And within a generation had become wealthy farmers, which drew the greed of the aristocracy.

The famous *Codex Manesse*, at Paris, in the possession of the Elector of the Palatinate, was then carried off to France when King Louis XIV laid the province to waste. The Codex bears witness to the romantic character of the age. It contains the songs of some hundred and fifty German and Swiss minstrels, who sang between the years 1200 and 1350. It was Manesse and his son, a canon at the minster, who undertook the collection out of pure enthusiasm.

Oberholzers Join the Swiss Guard

By the 18th century, the village of Oberholz was becoming crowded. Farming was becoming less difficult, allowing less labor to be needed. In addition, the death rate due to plagues has dropped dramatically. Child infancy deaths also were declining, and child accidents became fewer due to less help needed to harvest. The combination of all these factors meant some of the workforce needed to seek employment elsewhere.

The Vatican City in Rome was employing Swiss guards, knowing they were the best trained fighters of the times. Since the young men of Oberholz had not learned a trade outside their valley, some volunteered for service in the Swiss Guard. "There are few sources on this, but the Eschenbach parish books do document the deaths of some Oberholzers in Rome."

Johann Leonard Oberholzer, son of Johann Melchior Oberholzer, died as a young man in November 1762. . "He was dear to God and men, especially to the Holy Father, who tried very hard to keep him healthy along with his doctor, but in vain." This boy is cataloged as OS11111.12562 .

By way of a credible letter from our brother, we were informed that on this day in January 1769 a Roman Guard, the righteous youngling Vinzenz Oberholzer, son of the Burgher of Gibel, died and was buried in the San Pellegrino Cemetery in Rome. He is listed in our family tree as OS12567.

According to authentic testimony, a Mr Kaspar Oberholzer, both clerk and secretary of the Papal Guard, sent a message to the Pastor in Eschenbach, that the honorable man Jakob Oberholzer died in September of 1772 in the *Helig-Geist-Spital* in Rome; and then was buried in the San Pellegrino Cemetery.

Kaspar Oberholzer, Secretary of the Papal guard died. Records seem to indicate about the year 1770, but noting the above record it may have been as late as 1780.

Joseph Oberholzer, son of the pious burgher Johann Oberholzer in Gibel, and his wife Rosalie Riest, died as a Swiss Guard in Rome at age 86 on May 22nd, 1776. The following day he was buried in the San Pellegrino Cemetery, according to a letter from Faustus Ricci, Pastor of St Peter's Church in the Vatican, Rome.

Private Alois Oberholzer born in 1768, joined the Swiss Guard in 1784, and died June 27th, 1818 in Rome.

Kaspar Oberholzer, son of Corporal Alois Oberholzer and Catharina Simonis, born in Rome 1796, joined the Swiss Guard as a Halberdier in 1818, later became a private, retired in 1849 died at Rome after 1849.

- Records translated and adapted from German in *Leben im Grenzbereich* by Alois Stadler, page 29

Oberholzers Join the Swiss Guard

** *Leben im Grenzbereich*, Alois Stadler 2007

Science & Technology

do not make us immune to the laws of history

BIRTH CONGRATULATIONS!

Son to Jason & Lucinda Martin Oberholtzer November 22nd

The Old Zurich War Over Oberholz Mountain

Estimates are by Dennis L Oberholtzer and colored brown:

- OS Farmer Oberholzer est b 1390 - Der Hof Oberholz und Der Bauer Oberholzer in 1438.
The farm of Oberholz was documented March 5, 1438. (Kilger) Bauer meant he was head of the village.
He was an adult when persecuted by Zürich officials in 1438, being a wealthy & successful farmer.
Fall 1438 Oberholz becomes part of Canton Uznach, breaking from Canton of Zürich
- OS1 Uly Oberholzer est b 1418 - at Oberholz
Lived on the Oberholz Hof (farm), son of Farmer Oberholzer.
1452 Various Oberholzers were in Wald Church, some went to church in Canton Uznach
REF: *Das Alte Oberholz und die Familie Oberholzer*, 1999 Robert S Oberholtzer
- OS11 Son of Uly Oberholzer est b 1448 - Likely to have been the eldest son of the family.
- OS111 Bishop and Mrs Oberholzer est b 1475 - Lived on der Hof Oberholz (Upper Farm House, Oberholz)
One of two brothers, this one is the eldest and remained Catholic, the younger became Protestant
- OS1111 Hans and Mrs Oberholzer Lived on der Hof Oberholz (Upper Farm House, Oberholz)
This son remained Catholic, possibly the eldest, and inherited the farm at Oberholz. His wife may have been from Wald.
He was likely the head of Oberholz who would visit his uncle at Wald, and buried his wife there.
REF: *Story about the Oberholzer's decision to Believe*", *Leben im Grenzbereich*, Alois Stadler 2007, page 25

In today's world it seems silly that an obscure family on a secluded mountain could have caused a war. I mean, whoever heard of an Oberholzer? Well surprise! By the early 15th century, the Oberholzer family had made a very profitable life above the grove of trees. Grain prices were good, and there were enough family members to make it succeed. But greedy government officials were watching. Thus in 1438 Farmer Oberholzer became embroiled in an argument over paying taxes.

The impetus was a dispute between Zurich and Schwyz. Both places claimed Oberholz Mountain that was formerly under the authority of Frederick VII, 1400-1436 as the last Count of Toggenburg. He left no will, some say intentionally, but he was still young and likely did not get around to it. An 'apple of discord' was soon in the midst. A rivalry led to the Old Zurich War from 1436 - 1450. They fought particularly hard for possession of the County of Uznach. The provincial towns of Schwyz and Glarus preceded the city of Zurich. The question finally arose as to which authority the hamlet of Oberholz should come under. On one hand, witnesses from Wald claim Oberholz belonged to the County of Gruningen. On the

other hand, Mathis Wissling's Gultenbrief from 1438 clearly confirmed Oberholz belonged to Uznach.

"It remained undisputed that the Oberholzers in Zurich Parish of Wald were part of the church and subject to tithing. The Oberholzers above the grove of trees took the side of Schwyz and Glarus, because they could expect more understanding and freedom from them than the aristocratic burghers of Zurich. The Zurcher did not tolerate this. He had the head of Oberholz imprisoned in the Spring of 1438 and fined him 200 Lbs for disobedience. Farmer Oberholz did not give in, because he could rightly assume Schwyz and Glarus would come to his aid. And they really did stand up for him, for Farmer Oberholzer was listed on a federal diet for the County of Uznach in September of 1438."

- Translated and adapted from *Leben im Grenzbereich* by Alois Stadler 2007

Two month later the cantons of Schwyz and Glarus collaborated an agenda in Bern that the border in Oberholz would be determined by an impartial court. Zurich refused. The dispute was then decided by war. The farm of Oberholzer was documented March 5, 1438 (according to Kilger), with Farmer Oberholzer being persecuted in the Spring, and he was thrown into prison.

The strife fell into one of emulation between the two most energetic and talented statesmen of the two commonwealths. One of these leading men was the burgomaster Stussi of Zurich. The other was Ital von Reding of Schwyz, both highly gifted and energetic men. Even from their youth they were rivals, incited by Emperor Sigismund whose favor they enjoyed.

The war split into three periods. From 1436 to 1442 was a series of wasteful feuds waged by the Confederates alone. Schwyz had taken for itself the whole heritage in question, with only one fragmentary portion outside the Oberholz mountain left to its rival Zurich. Zurich was planning a direct commercial road to Italy through Graubunden. Deprived of her portion, Zurich retaliated by shutting her market against Schwyz and Glarus, causing a famine in the two districts. The Confederates did not act with impartiality in the matter, rather, they laid all blame on Zurich and drove her to arms.

The territory to the east of Lake Zurich was laid waste. This included the Oberholzer lands above the grove of trees in the valley. The portion of land the Schwyz wished to annex was still in limbo, being under the order of the federal Diet. Regardless, Zurich lost three villages to Schwyz and Glarus on the upper lake, and the island *Ufenau* which she had governed for half a century. And she was compelled to re-open her roads and markets.

"Zurchers then attacked Uznach towns with raids and campaigns. The Gasterlands and Uzner were ravaged and crops were seared throughout Wald, Ruti, Fishenthal, and Gruningen. The *Klingenberger Chronik* reported on Saturday evening of May 11th, 1440 how the men from Uznaberg and Gaster marched towards Wald and ravaged and plundered. Hittenberg is the neighboring hamlet of Oberholz just below the grove of trees. The marauders set fire to a house and barn, and left with a booty of 110 cattle."

- Translated and adapted from *Leben im Grenzbereich* by Alois Stadler

Deeply wounded by the position of the Confederates in opposition to Zurich, she thirsted for revenge. Thus the second period of conflict began. In June 1442, Zurich sought a foreign alliance. Stussi planned on joining with the deadly Austrian foe of the Confederates. Despite opposition by several nobles of the city, the coalition was arranged. Hapsburg Emperor Frederick III and his brother Albrecht of Aargau proceeded to Zurich to receive homage and allegiance from the enthusiastic population. The Confederates countered by approaching Bern for help. But Bern was only overseeing the political side of the dispute.

The war, though fiercer and bloodier than the first, was just as luckless, owing to the dissensions arising among the allies. And the men of Zurich were a bit unwilling to submit to a multiple headed army. The struggle carried on by fits and starts, and the Confederates even returned home one summer for the annual haymaking.

Returning to fight, the Confederates laid waste Zurich territory and proceeded to attack the city itself. During a confrontation at St Jacques on the Sihl, Stussi died in defence of the river bridge. His heroic death makes one almost forget his ambitious and misguided

policy. Still, Zurich had guns, but without rifling, with powder and a single ball that could penetrate from a distance.~ Thereby the Confederates attempted a truce, but the Austrians objected. The latter incited a mob to terrorize the people of Zurich, and fifteen leading men were beheaded.

The Confederates took siege of a castle at Greifensee in central Zurich lands, and killed sixty of the eighty men while Ital of Reding stood by. They then attempted a second siege of Zurich, but failed again. Austrian rulers realized they were no match against the Eidgenossen in the open field of battle. And she tired of profitless war. In summer of 1444, the war had escalated to the inclusion of French, by using mercenary troops from Charles VII. As Louis XI (the Daulphin) marched with thirty thousand troops on Basel and the Eidgenossen, they split in two while crossing the Birse River. Being surrounded on an island in the river, the troops were annihilated. The remaining troops hid behind the garden walls of St Jacques on August 26th. Still, Louis' troops eventually won the battle.

But King Louis XI lost some four thousand men in the fight, and concluded an honorable peace at Ensisheim on October 28th, 1444. Though this battle was lost by the Swiss, it was a turning point in the federal war. The third phase of the war was negotiations. Peace was at last concluded in 1450, in which Zurich was forced to give up the alliance with the Austrians. There was a reconciliation celebration in 1454. Since Schwyz and Glarus emerged from this war with *Seiger* (technical discernment) in 1450, they decided the tricky legal question of belonging to the people as ancestors. Uznach finally became part of the small County of Uznach. In 1479 the Cantons of Zurich, Schwyz, and Glarus agreed on a common, albeit still imprecise description of the canton border:

The line ran from Acheltschwil to Gibler Tobel to Chrine to Stocke to Frundsberg to Runs to the Jona brook west of Oberholz called Schittebach in 1565; then to Wolfsgrueb to VorderToss to Tosstock to Hindertoss and last to Dagelschberg. Since then the Oberholz hamlet has been part of the Goldingen community, formerly called Tagwen Oblinden. But

some of the Oberholzers continued to worship Sunday services at Wald.

Returning to ordinary life at Oberholz

It is unknown as to the fate of Farmer Oberholzer. The Ger farm was sold to the Rapperswil Hospital in 1452. It may have been part of a deal to release Farmer Oberholzer. In any event, he may have moved to Austria, as given as a possibility in the article on the Coat-of-Arms. By way of negotiations, in the year 1499 the Swiss won their independence from the Holy Roman Empire.

"The original *geheyst* forest extended far beyond the Wolfsgrub to the Tosstock and the Highlands. In the rearmost part, a last clearing yard was built between 1350 and 1400, which was later called Boo. Around 1450 -70 its owner was called Erni (Arnold) Held, who came from Uznach. Like the farmers in Oberholz, Nydergeheyst and Ger, this owner of the Boo was not part of the Wald Church or owed one tenth of his grain and haymaking there. The pastor of Wald testified in 1464 that this farm was also a real *ehofstatte* and was subject to tithing. This means that these late forest clearing farms were not only used as alp farms for summer cattle, but that the year-round living quarters were self-sufficient. The Boo cleared forest was not yet fully developed in 1464." ^^

Alphof Boo was an ordinary farm with arable land around 1450, including livestock and dairy farming. The Ruti monastery bought it around 1503 and ran it as an Alpine farm for summer cattle grazing and as a herding hut having cheese production. An inn was added around 1900, as the ox wagon with wine barrels show. ***

The Old Zurich War references:

Page 190 - 199 *Story of Switzerland*, Lina Hug & Richard Stead, 1890 G P Putnam

^^ *Leben im Grenzbereich*, Alois Stadler 2007, Page 15 2nd paragraph:

SEE MAP PAGE 15 FOR PLACE NAMES

*** *Caption of picture on Page 18 translated from Leben im Grenzbereich*, Alois Stadler 2007

**** *Caption of picture on page 19, translated from Leben im Grenzbereich*, Alois Stadler 2007

~~ Page 21 World Book Encyclopedia, Rifling was not invented until Jaeger Swiss Rifle in 1665

O b i t u a r i e s

Nan Marie Oberholzer, Goodville, East Earl 67 years August 27, 2021 -LNP
d/o Jay Glenn & Ruth Leaman Oberholzer

Ephraim M Oberholzer 87 Years, Ephrata PA Dec 14th, 2021

Virginia M Overholtzer 10/7/1940 - 10/29/2021 Lansdale PA wife/ Royden, Christ Lutheran Church,
Harleysville - Huff & Lakjer Funeral Home

George A Overholtzer Feb 8, 2021 at 84 years Honeybrook, formerly of Pottstown, preceded by brother
Harold. He is survived by wife Betty L Pursel Overholtzer

J Dean Brubaker 68yrs Tucson AZ , 1/15/1954 - 11/5/2022

s/o Aaron O & Esther Oberholzer Brubaker of Lancaster Co PA. Grad from Eastern Mennonite &
Millersville U. Survived by Nancy, 4 children

From Jennie Sperling:

Jerry Overholt 75 of Greenville TN, died Tuesday before Oct 21, 2022, survived by 2 sons: John & Leah
Overholt of Cookeville, and Russell Overholt of Greeneville

Holly N Judge 12/23/1972 - 10/23/2022 of Worchester PA, wife of Dennis F Judge, do Timothy and Norma
Overholt Landis

Jeanne Ziegler Overholtzer 91 of Upper Salford Twp PA, preceded by husband Willard Overholtzer in 1989.

Mildred H Overholt 89 of Northampton PA 12/12/1932 - 1/14/2022 wife of late Lloyd S Overholt in Feb 2003

Robert W Oberholzer 88 of Fleetwood PA died April 20, 2022 husband of Dorothy M Cronrath Oberholzer.
Born in Bechtelsville to Clifford & Florence Wolfe Oberholzer

Isabel Erbrick Oliver 8/6/1922 - 7/22/2021 Lower Gwynedd PA, d/o Arthur C Jones & Marian C Oberholzer Jones; 3
sons Joe, Bill, & Bob. Jenkintown united Methodist Church

A1.E59

JACOB OBERHOLTZER OF FRANCONIA
CEMETERY LOCATION

9-20-1996

***For those
who are
still seeking
family
ancestors,
here is
a list of
southern
Penna. and
other state
cemeteries***

AM- Alverton Mennonite Cemetery, Westmoreland Co., PA
 AN- Arligton National Cemetery, WA
 BC- Baptist Cemetery, Near Levering, OH
 BG- Blooming Glen Mennonite Cemetery, Blooming Glen, PA
 CC- Christ Church Cemetery, Towamencin
 CV- Cochella Valley Cemetery, Indio, CA
 DM- Doylestown Mennonite Cemetery, Doylestown, PA
 DRE- Deep Run East Cemetery, Bucks County, PA
 EC- East Coventry Mennonite Cemetery, Chester Co., PA
 FM- Franconia Mennonite Cemetery, Souderton, PA
 FW- First Methodist Cemetery, Wadsworth, OH
 GG- Garden Grove, CA
 GL- Groveland Mennonite Cemetery, Buks County, PA
 GM- Germantown Mennonite Cemetery, Germantown, PA
 GT- Green Tree Church Cemetery, Montgomery Co., PA
 HB- Harley Burying Ground, Franconia Twp., PA
 HC- Hoffman Cemetery, Smithton, PA
 HE- Harrison Center Chapel, Elkhart, IN
 IC- Indian Creek Reformad Cemetery, Montgomery Co., PA
 IL- Indianfield Lutheran Cemetery, Montgomery County, PA
 LC- Lutheran Cemetery, Nashville, OH
 LL- Line Lexington Mennonite Cemetery
 LS- Lower Salford Mennonite Cemetery, Montgomery Co., PA
 LV- LaVene Evergreen Cemetery, LaVene, CA
 LZ- Little Zion Lutheran Cemetery, Telford, PA
 MZ- Mt. Zion Cemetery, Pottstown, PA
 OG- Old Goshenhoppen Luth. & Ref. Cemetery
 OH- Old Hereford Mennonite Cemetery, Bally, PA
 OM- Oakdale Memorial Cemetery, Glendora, CA
 PC- Pomona, CA
 PL- Pinelawn, NY
 PM- Plains Mennonite Cemetery
 PR- Price Burying Ground, Lower Salford Twp., PA
 RH- Rockhill Mennonite Cemetery,
 RV- Ridge Valley
 SC- Sacramento, CA
 SJ- St. Johns Cemetery Masoleum, Bangor, PA
 USK- Upper Skippack Mennonite Cemetery
 SK- Skippack Mennonite Cemetery, Skippack, PA
 LSK- Lower Skippack Mennonite Cemetery
 SD- Saunders Cemetery, Daleville, IN
 SM- Salford Mennonite Cemetery, Montgomery County, PA
 SO- Souderton Mennonite Cemetery, Souderton, PA
 SP- St. Peter's Lutheran Cemetery, Pineland, Chester Co.
 SV- Schwenksville Cemetery Schwenksville, PA
 TM- Towamencin Mennonite Cemetery
 TR- Trinity Reformed Cemetery, Collegeville, PA
 UC- Unionville Church Cemetery, Lehigh County, PA
 VM- Vincent Mennonite Cemetery, Chester Co., PA
 WB- West Branch Cemetery, Ogle Co., IL
 WL- Weaverland Mennonite Cemetery, Lancaster Co., PA
 ZU- East Union Cem. San Joaquin Co CA
 ZJ- Jedi Cem, San Joaquin Co CA

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Overholser Family Reunion 2021 Paradise Park, PA

Mark Steffka, Rebecca Steffka, Linda Wanaselja, Charlotte Kulp, Earline Oberholtzer, Dennis Oberholtzer, Jean O Schaffer, Joy Bruder, Perry Bruder, Matt Kulp took the picture.

Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Minnesota are represented in 2021. Let's add a few states in 2023! Families that are stretched across the country come here to get together and enjoy the scenery, take in some family history, and get to meet new friends in brotherly love! Come Join US!

OFA OFFICERS FOR 2023

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A special Thank You to those who have contributed over the past three years.

**Your support is in prayer, letters, contact, OFA website searches, and
contributions is what keeps the OFA going.**

Thank You to Barbara Bernhart who has donated a wooden shelf, and filing cabinets.

Donations by:

Gordon Ross Gerhart III

Jennie Sperling

Billie O Stewart

Marriage Congratulations!

Phillip Horst Oberholtzer, 31 Zartman Lane, Lebanon PA

to Kay Lorell Weaver of 514 N Muddy Creek Road, Denver PA

Justin Ray Oberholtzer 658 Maple Grove Rd New Holland,

s/o Joseph Nolt 7 Lucy Nolt Oberholtzer

to Melissa Reiff Zimmerman 53 Balmerstown Rd Leola , d/o James Reiff

& Sharon

Weaver Zimmerman - LNP Sun Aug 1, 2021

Dean's List, Congratulations!

Justin Oberholtzer of Leola at Central Penn College - May 9, 2021 LNP

OFA REUNION, Southeastern PA,

**Check our Summer 2023 OFA Bulletin
or contact any of the OFA Officers for schedule of time & place. .**

OR

Check out the OFA Website: <http://www.overholser.net> or Contact Us at
info@overholser.net

If you need more information, contact one of the OFA Websites, or one of the OFA Officers.

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

The Second printing of
The Oberholtzer Book, 1995 by Barbara Ford

is now available. Price of \$40.00 includes shipping. It includes the first five known generations of Oberholzers in
America and Canada.

Contact Geoffrey Martin, Treasurer for purchase information.

Newly Published 2020 by Lavern E Martin:

The Jacob and Mary Oberholzer Family

of Franklin County PA

Bible record shows Jacob was born in Lancaster County,

s/o Abraham and Susanna G (Wenger) Oberholtzer

Contact Lavern E Martin, 14578 Wayne Highway, Waynesboro PA 17268

\$13 tax included, cell phone 717-404-5822 Monday-Friday 7 -5pm

The OFA Has copies to sell.

The original Biblical text uses *Elohim* over 2300 times, but *God* zero.

If you take Jesus Christ and history out of life, life becomes futile.