



OFA Bulletin

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Overhalser	Overhalt	VanHulser	Atherholt	Overhuls
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Our 500th Anabaptist Celebration! *Oberholzer, Hess, and Stauffer families!*

**Overholser Family Reunion August 2nd, 2025
St John's Center Church, Rt 625 Terre Hill PA
Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, USA**

Join us for our celebration of the 500th year since Anabaptism began in Europe. Mel Weaver of Grace Chapel will be our main speaker as we celebrate the main reason we came to America. Freedom to worship as we please without persecution. Reverend Weaver, of whom many of us are cousins, will help us understand the beginnings of Anabaptist Bible doctrine; and how our ancestors became steadfast to the point of death for the truth of Scripture.

We also will be providing a revolving slide show, starting in Oberholz Switzerland, moving down the Rhine River to the Palatinate, and on to America. We will stop the pictures to discuss any questions you may have.

We will begin to gather at 9AM, get to know and converse, then have a pot luck luncheon, with meat and fruit trays provided.

Wear any Old World clothes you may have.

Come Join

**Overholser Family
Association Bulletin**
Vol. XXXXIV No 2 Summer 2025

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Welcome New OFA Members!!!

***Invite some friends to join us this
year at our Reunion!***

Ways 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.

Pondering our American Politics

The founders of the United States of America understood the demands of a people wanting freedom from excessive taxation. But they also comprehended that only moral and religious people have the motivation to keep the country from falling into anarchy.

The cities of America are allowing half of their children to quit school, many without the ability to read and write. These children will grow in one of two directions. They will either become slaves of the state; or they will turn to evil and violence to obtain their needs and wants. This country must gather its fortitude to reverse these trends

Oberholzer's Covered Bridges - Which which is which?

- by Chris Oberholtzer, Dennis Oberholtzer, & Daryl Fry

Oberholtzer's Covered Bridge

There are two covered bridges in north eastern Lancaster County PA. The only difference in the name is one vowel. At the Red Run Campground stands the Oberholtzer's Covered Bridge. It once crossed the Muddy Creek, now alongside the campground. The property has a long history of ownership:

- 1772 Souber to Samuel Martin Book A Vol5, Pg 251
1822 Samuel Martin to Henry Frankouser original mill built 1824
1847 Rachel and John Lupold to Joseph W Oberholtzer
1851 Abraham Eberly to Joseph W Overholser, miller
1854 Isaac Martin additional land to Joseph W Oberholtzer

Notice the spelling change. The bridges name at some unknown time became Oberholtzer's Bridge. This is the only known spelling with an "a".

- 1858 John Lupold to Joseph Oberholtzer This sale included a house, grist mill, and sawmill. Joseph is JL374 Joseph W Oberholtzer and wife Magdalena Wanner
1866 The Covered Bridge was built in 1866 having a length of 104 feet, and 15 feet wide. It has a Burr type truss system. The builder was Elias McMellen. It has vertical plank siding. He owned the mill on Muddy Creek, bought from his Uncle Daniel & Maria Eby Wanner

- 1870 Joseph Oberholtzer to Joseph Wenger
1875 Joseph Wenger to Samuel Sensenig
1896 Joseph Wenger to R Davis Oberholtzer of Bowmansville, Brecknock Twp.
1898 Richard Oberholtzer and wife Lizzie of Bowmansville PA to Menno Eberly

Today, this covered bridge is in poor condition, and cannot be driven on. It sits on Red Run Campground, 877 Martin Church Road, New Holland PA, west of Route 816 in Earl Township, Lancaster County.

REF: *The Covered Bridges of PA* by Susan M Zacher

Red Run Campground brochure

Pictures below by Dennis L Oberholtzer, Feb 8, 2025

Joseph W is JL374 in the Jacob O of Brecknock Line

Oberholtzer's Covered Bridge north of the Cat's Back

Thank You to Chris Oberholtzer of Roanoke VA for this information.

Oberholtzer's Covered Bridge north of the Cats Back





**Looking north of Oberholtzer's
Bridge north of the Cat's Back**

On the north side of the Cat's Back east of Farmersville PA was the home of two brothers of SL2467 Christian H Oberholtzer 5/11/1837 - 1/17/1900. On the corner south of the covered bridge was SL24672 Christian Oberholtzer. Christian later sold out and moved to Landis Valley. This bridge is also built with vertical siding. As we walk over the covered bridge, we go north to the T intersection about 1/8th mile away. Across the intersection is a large home, once owned by SL24671 Jacob Oberholtzer, brother of Christian.

This bridge has been hit at the roof by two trucks, too tall to enter. It is presently being repaired from the last accident.

During the Reunion this Year, Dennis L Oberholtzer will be at the International Shroud Conference and Symposium in St Louis MO.

**This is a sensitive subject around the world,
and needs as much help and guidance as possible.
Pray for guidance for the Shroud team
to know what paths to take.**

Corrections and Additions

OW Henry Owerwasser

- Thomas Armstrong

Upon my recent appointment as your new Secretary, I asked Dennis what can I learn to assist me in my role. He suggested I read the OFA Bulletins. So I began my journey of reading the aforementioned bulletins. To my surprise I was delighted to discover a number of stories on my own ancestral families such as the Kreys and the op den Graeffs. \

Then I came upon the genealogy of Henry Owerwasser on page 7 of the Winter 2012 Edition. Henry happens to be my 6th great grandfather. The article delineates his descendants from Henry's daughter marrying John Brubaker, by which they have three sons and one daughter. My fourth great grandfather, Abraham, was their second son.

Abraham, quite a gifted individual, becomes a farmer, school master and a prolific fractur artist: to the degree that Mennonite Life is in possession of 4 of his works and I discovered at least 9 more of his pieces on the internet.

Abraham and second wife, Anna Kreider, gave life to seven children, 5 sons and two daughters. Their seventh child is Henry Brubaker, my third great grandfather. As cited on page 9, Henry marries Hannah Kurtz. This is where to my amazement, I find second great grandfather, Abraham Kurtz Brubaker, missing. Then I remembered I had the same problem when trying to research his parents, coming from the opposite direction.

What helped me to connect Abraham Kurtz Brubaker to his parents was

finding his obituary in the Lancaster Newspapers of Monday, March 16, 1903. In this obituary, towards the end, cites his four surviving sisters. Three of these sisters were married and one listed as Miss Fannie of Salunga, PA. upon further cross-referencing, I found they all shared the same parents, Henry and Hannah Brubaker. It should be noted they were also listed as daughters of Henry and Hannah in the aforementioned descendants of Henry Owerwasser and in the Brubakers of America book in possession of Mennonite life; hence, I found Abraham Brubaker's parents.

Ir raised a question. Why was he absent in these genealogies. Upon further examination, Abraham was initially married to Leah Shank, who unfortunately died at the age of 29. Leah had her first child, Ann Brubaker at the age of 17, which means she was pregnant while she was 16. Could it have been that Abraham Kurtz Brubaker was the recipient of a "shunning" that caused a falling away with his parents? This I do know, Abraham left the Mennonite Church and became a member of the Methodist Church and he also left farming, as was his father's occupation and Abraham pursued a career as a shoemaker.

The following family line on page 10 is the corrections and additions for the Henry Owerwasser genealogy.

It should be noted that it is not unusual to have several different surname spellings for one person, or family. It is rarely found, however, six different spellings for one person. The multiple reasons for this is explained in the previous articles of the OFA Bulletins. - DLO

Rev I E Oberholtzer hand-written thoughts in his Comp Book

ca1930's, typed by Dennis L Oberholtzer, February 2025

italics by Dennis L Oberholtzer

Reverend Isaiah E Oberholtzer is from the SL22 Line of Oberholtzers in Lancaster Co PA. He was a missionary to China from the 1920's to about 1942 during World War II. He was the first major genealogist for the Oberholzers in America. He wrote many letters from China to American O's on rice paper; and while in America on many types of paper and filled several composition notebooks. The following is from his Comp Book #6. He does not indicate where all his material originated. In another notebook Isaiah does mention the Fretz genealogy is in the Yale University Library.

It is a matter of interest to know who our ancestors were on American soil and their history. And it is even of greater interest to know who our progenitors were in the Old World, and something of their lives. We are also curious to know from what nationality we spring, whether we originate with the Spaniards, the Greeks, Romans, Gauls, Germans, or Swiss. The solution of this latter problem rests with the establishing of the Journal of the family, which may be not so difficult.

It is recorded in the *Book of Heraldry* journal in the public Library of Vienna, that the family of Bretz (Fretz), as formerly written, had its origin in Trier, on the horn [of the] Rhine, where Fabius Bretius, a Roman General of Calvary, located about 224 A. D. having been a native of Capua in Southern Italy. He married Olfa, daughter of a German Duke, and died 263 A.D. On his line of descent was Daniel Bretz, who died 1681, leaving two sons, Felix and Christof, one of whom is an ancestor of John Philip Bretz, who was born in Windersheim, near Crentmacht on the Rhine in 1755, and who immigrated to America and settled in Lancaster Co PA where he died and is buried. Members of this family now spell the name Pretz.

While it is now probable that we descend from the line of the above Daniel Bretz, it may yet be possible if we could get to the facts. The discrepancy in the spelling of the name Bretz, Pretz, or Fretz has little point in the question. Members of the Moore {?} family at different times in various locations change the spelling.

The fact that Fabius Bretius located not far from the place of the vicinity of our ancestors gives coloring to the idea that the latter were descendants of the former. Manheim near which tradition says our ancestors were located, is about one hundred miles east from Trier, on the Upper Rhine [River], in the vicinity of which Fretz's are still to be found, and about one hundred and thirty miles south from Trier, at Gebweiler and Muehlhausen, are also located many Fretz. If this the foundation of the family in the fatherland is established, it is then evident that the family originated with the Romans, the nation of the Caesars, and assisted in the founding of that once mighty empire.

According to tradition of the Fretz family, the ancestors John and Christian Fretz, with a third brother who died on the voyage, came from near the city of Manheim, Providence of Baden Germany. Formerly known as the Palatinate, of Rhenish Prussia, and therefore were of German nationality. Although during the persecutions of the Mennonites from the Palatinate were among its early settlers of Bucks, Montgomery, and Chester Counties among them, if tradition of the family can be relied on, were the Moyer ancestors.

The Fretz brothers came over single men, married their wives in American soil, and here were all their children born.

It was formerly thought that John Fretz of Lancaster Co PA, Barbara Fretz Longenecker, Jacob Fretz, and Henry Fretz were also sons of Christian Fretz Sr. of Tinicum Twp. But his will made in writing January 22, 1777 and proved April 26, 1784, and on record at Doylestown PA shows that they were Not his children. We must therefore look for their ancestors elsewhere.

Reverend Christian was married into the Fretz family, and that is why he was so interested in their genealogy.

Sometimes it takes ten minutes to sleep five hours,

And sometimes five hours to go ten minutes.

Henry Owerwasser Family Updated

OS11215.27665 [OW] Henry II Oberholzer 12/19/1706 -

same as Henry Overholds who came on the Jamaica Galley in 1738/9 at age 32
and same as HW Henry Overholt on page 284 of *The Oberholtzer Book*
and same as Henry Omhults of Lancaster County on the 1780 PA Tax List Index.
and same as OW Henry Owerwasser of Brubaker Valley Road, Lancaster Co PA
OW Henry Owerwasser (Ourwalt) Elizabeth Township, Lanc Co PA

Warrant 100 acres Mar 2, 1738, surveyed Apr 24, 1739; Patented May 11, 1767 to John Brubaker Henry's property went to only one daughter and her husband, each getting half. She must have died by 1767, for husband John Brubaker inherited the entire 100 acres.

OW1 Daughter Oberholtzer Strasburg Twp, Lanc.Co

m [E2--3] John Brubaker 1733 -

The couple moved to Strasburg Twp, where son Martin later lived

OW11 [3--1] Isaac Brubaker Martic & Drumore Twps no wife or ch known

OW12 [3--2] Abraham Brubaker 1760 - 1831 Leacock & East Lampeter Twps
1st m Esther Lehn 2nd m Ann Kreider 7 ch

OW127 Henry K Brubaker 1808 - 1893

m Hannah Kurtz	E Lampeter Twp	10 ch
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OW1271 Abraham Kurtz Brubaker 1830 - 1903

1st m Leah Shank	12 children
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2nd m Elizabeth Ronk	no known issue
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OW1272 Benjamin Brubaker 1832 - 1855

OW1273 John Brubaker 1833 - 1860 single

OW1274 Anna Brubaker 1836 - 1837

OW1275 Elizabeth Brubaker 1837 -

OW1276 Mary Brubaker 1838 - 1905 m John H Weidman 2 children

OW1277 Sarah Brubaker 1839 - 1866

OW1278 Lydia Brubaker 1843 - 1935 m Levi Brenner Hershey 4 children

OW1279 Francis Brubaker 1846 - 1922

OW1270 Leah Brubaker 1848 - 1920 m Abner Dussinger Boose 3 children

REF: Thomas E Armstrong; *The Oberholtzer Book*, 1995 B Ford; OS Line, Dennis L Oberholtzer; Rupp's Ship Records; 1780 Lancaster Co Tax List; Lancaster Co PA Warrants & Patents Records; OFA Bulletin Winter 2012; OW & HW Henry Overholt, Winter 2024

500th Anniversary Celebration

This year we have the extreme pleasure of exploring Anabaptism, the ancestral roots of the Overholser family, as this year is the 500th anniversary of the beginning of this set of beliefs and values. This was a profound outcome of the reformation of Christendom. So many of our ancestors adhered to this faith, to the point many of them were persecuted, imprisoned, and some martyred. In many cases they fled for their lives,

In light of the significance of this year, we have invited the Reverend/Pastor Mel Weaver, of Grace Chapel, Elizabethtown, to help us all understand many of the doctrines, beginnings, persecutions and how the Anabaptist Church navigated the initial troubled years. Pastor Weaver shares ancestry with our association: Johann Anton Weber (a minister) one of his and our ancestor's from Zurich, immigrated to Pennsylvania in 1710 because of these hardships. Pastor Weaver will also share his linkage to at least one of those who were martyred for the cause of his belief.

Several other institutions have already or have made plans to commemorate this event. We as Overholser Family Association would enjoy having you celebrate with us.

We would be remiss if we ignored this momentous event, so we are thinking of other ways to add to Pastor Weaver's presentation to make it a memorable time.

One thing we would like to do is for everyone to wear or bring Old Order Mennonite wardrobe, so when we take our group picture, we could have a cherished photo for us to use to share this event in other forums. It is our intention to invite other family lines and to invite the press, so the public can be advised of this anniversary. If anybody has any ideas we are open to suggestions.

One of Pastor Mel's cousins has already asked for a promotional piece to share with siblings. This could be a very worthwhile event, if we play our cards right. We truly believe this is not an event you will want to miss.

Please make plans now to join us on August 2, 2025 at St John's Center Church, Rt 625, Terre Hill, PA. We hope to see you there.

Obituaries

Curtis Miller 88 of Troy Dec 20, 1936 Logansport IN - Mar 19, 2025 s/o John Miller & Orpha Jones

Lawrence Overholser 82 of Falcon CO Oct 20, 1942 Limon CO - Feb 18, 2025 s/o Lawrence Sr & Anna Overholser survived by wife Shirley, Steve & Tiffany Overholser, Rich Overholser, and Nancy & Shawn Shanklin of Colorado Springs CO

Carl Dean Overholser 96 of Delphi IN March 20, 1928 - Feb 22, 2025 s/o Carl C & Bethel Victoria Gee Overholser at home near Cutler IN, survived by 4 ch: Martin & Sandra Overholser, Gail Ann Overholser, Vicky Fern Snipes-Sorrells, & Susan O Fisher

Lulu Ann Pease, wife of Theodore Luff Overholser

Clara O Hutchins 100 of New Paris OH May 12, 1924 Gratis OH - Feb 25, 2025 d/o Everett & Helen Stevens Overholser; survived by James Hutchins & dau Rebecca Peffley

Marguerite Miller Petersheim 92 born Mar 16, 1932 Columbus OH - Jan 21, 2025 d/o Noble Miller & Martha Trigg; survived by Mike Petersheim of San Luis Obispo CA & Dave Petersheim of Sullivans Island SC
- these sent by Patrick McGarry

Taming the Wild West - *the Rest of the Story*

In the Winter issue it was mentioned one of the members of the posse chasing Jesse James gang of outlaws was a Dr Overholt. Thanks to Dan Draeger, who sent in an article from ***Physician Tribute*** about Dr Henry Overholt, we have the rest of the story.

Dr George Henry Overholt was born near Beamsville Ontario on March 7, 1842. He was the 3rd of 7 children to MT243 Mark Overholt and the former Catherine Gilmore. His parents farmed in Lincoln County near Beamsville. .. He had brothers Alfred & Nathan, Almeda Overholt, William Franklin, Peter, and Elizabeth Jane. Dr Overholt's father died in Romney Twp near Wheatley May 11, 1888, while living with William Franklin.

Dr Overholt married the first time May 6, 1865 to Charlotte Harriet Warren in Wentworth Co Ontario. Her parents, William Henry Warren and Harriett Greenslade in Montreal. William was a church organist at Christ Church Cathedral in 1842.

Henry Graduated as an MD from Albany Medical College in 1866. They had a five year old son George Alison Overholt who died Sept 10, 1869. Another son, Richard Thomas Overholt was born in 1869 at Wheatley. In 1870 the family migrated to Madelia Minnesota. There they had a daughter Laura Grace Overholt in 1873 and Stella Overholt came in 1874. G H Overholt was born June 4th 1875. Charlie Overholt came on July 19, 1876 and Nellie on December 22, 1879.

After the Jesse James episode on September 7, 1876, Dr Overholt remained as Superintendent of Schools for Madelia until 1877. By 1885 the family moved to Kenyon, Goodhue Co MN. Son Richard was living separately with wife Jennie and son Archibald. Born in Ontario, Richard died in 1903 and buried at Kenyon Cemetery.

Mrs Overholt died April 9, 1906. Son Charlie died Sept 4, 1918. Both buried at Kenyon. Dr Henry married a second time to Betsey Groven in 1907. She was from Norway. Her son Clarence was adopted by Dr Henry.

MT2433 Dr Overholt died at home February 23, 1928 in Kenyon MN. Betsey passed away on April 18, 1934. Her son Clarence served in WWI and WWII.

Obituaries continued

Sent in by Jennie R Sperling:

Judith Gail Lucente Mar 4, 1940 Abington PA - Aug 1, 2023 Lansdale PA only d/o Henry and Naomi Oberholtzer ; no issue

Linda Ann Overholt Sept 9, 1962 - Nov 13, 2024 Sellersville PA, no issue; Wife of Michael (Jacob) Overholt ; d/o Raymond & Kathryn (Royer) Ketterer.; sis/o Dennis Ketterer of Perkasie PA

Marlene Trucks Nov 21, 1944 Phoenixville PA - Sept 11, 2023 Lansdale PA; d/o Howard & Mae Overholtzer; Survived by dau Crystal Wasson, Messena NY & grd son Austin Saylor

Sent in by Patrick McGarry:

Norman Warner Feb 26, 1934 Piqua - Jan 9, 2025 Centerville, s/o Herschel D & Wilma L (Smith) Warner. son John (Teri) Warner & Lisa Warner

Eileen Joyce Beachler Oct 14, 1928 - Dec 22, 2024 d/o Raymond & Nellie (Flora) Wrightsman of Flint MI, Old German Baptist Brethren N Manchester IN 4 ch surviving

Darrell Flory Sr died Dec 28, 2024 34,450 days s/o Oscar & Thelma Flory
Korean War & U S Coastguard Trinity Lutheran Church 3 ch surviving

June Linder June 8, 1929 Darke Co OH - Dec 20, 2024 Greenville OH
son Steven Linder of New Madison & Sharon Linder of Greenville

David E Flora Apr 19, 1941 Cutler - Nov 14, 2024 Rossville s/o Herman D & Catherine (Mohler) Flora ACP Cryogenics 3 children

Doris M Yoder Dec 8, 1931 Brookville - Nov 16, 2024 Storypoint Troy OH
dau: Junell & Mike Lynch of Covington & Bonita & Kenneth Rogers of Covington

Landon Edward Overholser Dept 5, 2002 Dayton OH - Aug 24, 2024 s/o Eric & Rachel

Ruth E Shaffer Aug 17, 2024 W Manchester OH at age 102 d/o John & Ida Garber
two dau: Phyllis & Bill Crumbley & Gloria Shaffer

Wayne Eugene Stutsman Jun 29, 1935 Elkhart IN - Jan 27, 2025 Union MI, s/o Sam & Esther (Fruchey) Stutsman.

Lloyd Oberholtzer born Ephrata PA s/o Phares & Anna Oberholtzer, 86 of Bamberg SC

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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.

Carrots come in eight different colors. But Americans predominantly eat orange carrots. The orange carrot came to America by way of the Swiss Anabaptists, the first farmers who tapped this fertile land.

Reunions around the States:

115th Overholser Family Reunion begins Friday August 1 at Yoder's Family Restaurant in New Holland at 6PM for dinner and conversation. Our Reunion continues Saturday August 2nd, 2025 at :

St John's Center Church, Rt 625 Terre Hill Pennsylvania

**102nd Overholtzer Reunion, IA Community Building, Tingley IOWA
1st Saturday in August; Jenesse Tull, 435 E Main St, Tingley IA 50863**

**Fretz Family Reunion, First Saturday in August, 11 AM
355 Kingspond Lane, Souderton, Pennsylvania 18964**

Hess Family invited to our Reunions

By the 14th century, the Hess family lived in the same valley as the Protestant Oberholzers in the Aathal. In the OS (Oberholzers in Switzerland) Line, every two to three pages a Hess married into the Oberholzers. This carried on throughout the 18th century. We are all family! Gather your Hess friends and come join us as we get to know our cousins.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

In the Winter 2025 Bulletin under *Known Oberholzer Connections* there was a typo with MV Marcus Oberholtzer c1760 - Rockingham Co VA .

The OS number should read OS11215.27722

Check out the OFA Website:

<http://www.overholser.net> or Contact Us at
info@overholser.net; or Facebook at OverholserFamilyAssociation