

Schmucker • Smoker • Smucker



John Schmucker Homestead

Family Association Newsletter

Winter 2016-2017

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Newsletter Expense

These Newsletters are our largest expense, second to our family gathering. To help defray the cost, please send an email to Jerrold Smoker, our mailing list registrar at jsmoker@msn.com. When emailing Jerrold, please include your full name and address to assure that the mailing list database is up-to-date.

What a year it has been for various members of the SSS Family Association.

Last Fall a group of nearly 50 "cousins" traveled to Switzerland, France, and Germany on the SSS Family Heritage Tour. We traveled to regions where we are certain Christian Schmucker and members of his immediate family have been documented to have resided. Those areas included Beattenburg and Grindelwald, Switzerland and Montbeliard, France. We also visited numerous other sites on our trip including, Zweibrucken, Germany, the town where Nicholas Stoltzfus called home, (his daughter Barbara married John Schmucker, son of Christian I), Schmocken, Switzerland...the village above Beattenburg, Switzerland believed to be our "heimat" or name place, and many sites linked to our Anabaptist Heritage. Later in the newsletter you will see a notice of another Anabaptist Heritage Tour that will again be hosted by Lois and Lamar Mast. Also in this issue is an article written by Sam Smucker regarding the Schmucker farm family we met in Schmocken.

Our 40th Anniversary SSS Family Gathering was held in Lancaster, PA. 139 "Cousins" participated in the Gathering held at the Lancaster County Christian School. General session topics included presentations on our family history, SSS family DNA research, and Anabaptist migrations to America. Workshops were also available to participants interested in learning how to speak Pennsylvania Dutch, share their family stories, make a small quilt, and learn the art of comb painting. Evening festivities included an Amish Youth Sing and an auction of SSS crafts and gift items. Proceeds from the auction were shared with the Nicholas Stoltzfus House Preservation Fund. During our business meeting participants reaffirmed the current slate of officers, affirmed the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society-SSS Family Genealogy Database Project, and approved replacing board "retiree", Susan Kindt with Emily Smucker Beidler. Feedback from participants will be used to plan our 2021 SSS Family Gathering. If you have suggestions for the 2021 SSS Family Gathering, please e-mail them to jjsmoker@verizon.net.

We are very interested in collecting family stories. We will either publish them in our Newsletter and/or post them on our "www.SSSFamily.org" website. Please send them my way via: jjsmoker@verizon.net.

What Is In This Issue?

In this issue you will find:

- A report on the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society - SSS Family Genealogy Database project authored by Emily Smucker Beidler.

- An interview of Ueli and Erika Schmocker of Beattenburg/Schmocken, Switzerland who our “cousins” met on our 2015 SSS Family Heritage Tour of Germany, Switzerland, and France. The article was written by Sam Smucker one of the tour participants.

- An opportunity to participate on a European Mennonite Heritage Tour which will be conducted by Lois Ann and Lamar Mast who served as the tour guides for the

2015 SSS Family Heritage Tour. Many of the sites that were covered by the 2015 SSS tour are planned stops on the 2017 European Mennonite Heritage Tour. Our 2015 SSS heritage tour was an outstanding experience!

- An excerpt of an article written by Emily Beidler Smucker on the 18th Century Massacre in Berks County and also an article memorializing a Great Aunt.

- Recognizing the 2016 donor/membership renewals

The SSS Family Genealogy Database Project by Emily Smucker Beidler & Jim Smoker

John R. Smucker, Past President and SSS Family Historian began to compile twenty eight loose leaf binders of family genealogic records and related family data. Art Smucker dreamed of entering these data and records into a searchable database. Art found a software application began the data entry process. Later, Art, enlisted the support of D. Richard Miller who continued the data collection and entry effort. As of earlier this year, there were 48,000 family records recorded. The SSS Family Association Board recognized the daunting challenge ahead. We estimated that there were over 180,000 family records to yet be entered and the software, “Master Genealogist”, was being sunsetted and no longer supported. A decision was made

to approach the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS) to discern their interest in taking on our project as it was learned that the LMHS had worked with other family genealogy databases. An agreement was reached and the SSS Board approved (later ratified at the 2016 SSS Family Gathering) the advancing of \$4000 to cover the initial costs associated with the project. The current projects goals are to; convert all existing SSS genealogy data from the Mater Genealogist database to a more current database, complete the entry of all data available in the 28 binders, and provide SSS family members with (read only) access to the database. Emily Smucker Beidler is our Liaison to LMHS for this project. Her report follows:

In July, our SSS organization approved \$4000.00 to be allocated to the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society for the purpose of completing the task of entering all genealogical information into a database.

At the time, Steve Ness, lead historian, suggested that we plan for more money to be allocated, estimating that this amount would cover roughly 13 weeks of part-time work, (20 hours per week.) It's very difficult to estimate

how long a project of this size takes. We committed to just the original \$4000 at that point.

At the time of the August turn-over of information from D.Richard Miller to LMHS, the genealogy comprised of 57 binders, 24 of which were entered into a database, accessible to the SAGA organization. This information is still available there. However, the program in which the database was entered, called TMG, was discontinued. So the first step for Steve at LMHS, was to convert all of the old database into a new program called Roots Magic. (This is a common problem for genealogists and Roots Magic seems to be the general direction that most genealogists are choosing.) There is also a last carton with some binders that are not numbered.

Steve has hired two people to work on this project for us. Both have done this kind of work before and Steve praised them for their ability to work quickly but also to hold high standards for quality so that time is used efficiently on our genealogy project. As they enter new information, they are citing which binder it came from as LMHS will be housing the binders from here on out. (Binder numbers weren't cited in database before this time – probably would have been hard to do as the information gathered was constantly growing.)

To date, Steve estimates that about 25% of the money allocated has been used. With that money/time, they transferred all of the information from binders 1-24, which were already entered, and finished binder #25 and #26. Right now they are working on binder #27.

Binder #25 took a great deal of time because they were entering everything – the family pages contain all of the basic genealogical information but there were lots of obituaries, written correspondences, etc. to wade through. There is also a growth curve, Steve noted, in taking on a project like this – especially one that has already been started. He noted that #26 and #27 are not taking as long because there is less to wade through beyond the family genealogical pages.

A few months ago, Steve raised the question as to how much information to put into the database – Richard gave the directive to make it as complete as possible and enter everything. I agree with this directive if we had unlimited funding but I know that's not the case! Therefore, I recommend to Steve that his group focus on the genealogical data on the family pages and cite carefully. That way, if someone wants the additional information, it is open to the public through LMHS genealogical library for research.

I asked for an estimate as to how many hours it takes per binder – Steve estimates 35 per binder. At this rate, we may be able to finish through binder 33 of the 57 binders.

I asked how soon we would be able to access the database through LMHS. Steve said that they change passwords, etc. at the beginning of the new year in January for their online library. He's hoping that by February, he can have a separate password for our database. SSS members will be able to access this, as well as members of LMHS online.

In the upcoming SSS newsletter, I suggest telling members that the new password to access the database will be sent to everyone's e-mail in April, and that they should update current e-mail to Jerry Smoker via jsmoker@msn.com. Chances are we can send out a group e-mail with the password access before that – but it also gives us some wiggle room and time to get more information into the expanded database.

It Happened In Berks County by Emily Smucker Beidler

How I'll remember you
Anna Burki Hochstetler

I drive north on 222 from Lancaster towards Reading and I see the break in the mountains off in the horizon – the break where legend has it that the Indians came down from Erie that fateful night and I think of you, Anna Hochstetler, my 7 times great grandmother. I think of you and how history has been unfair to you. There are only two things written about you specifically: one is that that your last words were a cry to God in German as you lifted your eyes heavenward while an Indian pierced your heart. The second is that you were a “sturdy woman” who had a hard time climbing out of the basement window that night your house was burned to the ground – as if it might have been your fault for taking too long to scramble out, allowing the Indians to return to capture your husband and sons, then massacre you and your daughter.

But this is not fair Anna. This is not fair to remember you this way because I've seen that window frame,

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Schmocker Family Interview by Sam Smucker

In October 2015, the Schucker-Smucker-Smoker Association sponsored a tour of Switzerland. The tour visited Beatenberg, a small town outside of Interlachen nestled into the Swiss Alps from which Smucker historians believe Christians Schmuckers' ancestors originated before coming to Grindelwald.

In Beatenberg we had the opportunity to visit the farm of Ueli and Erika Schmöcker. Along with their children, Melanie, Andrea and Marcel they joined us for dinner at our hotel that evening. Over e-mail I asked Erika and her family several questions about their family life and farm life.

First of all, tell us about your family.

Our family consists of Ueli and Erika, both 50 years old, with their children Melanie, 20 years old, Andrea, 18 years old and Marcel, 15 years old. Ueli is a farmer. In winter, he works also part-time at the local ski lift. Erika works one day per week at the tourist office in Beatenberg. The other days she does the paper and housework and helps on the farm. Melanie works full-time at the local community in Beatenberg in the office. Andrea is currently studying one year at the Wirtschaftsschule in Thun. Marcel is still in secondary school in Beatenberg.

How many people live in Beatenberg?

Beatenberg has about 1,200 inhabitants. This number hasn't changed a lot in the last years. So our village isn't growing, but it's neither decreasing.

For what is Beatenberg known by other people nearby?

First of all Beatenberg is known for the great view of the Swiss Alps, especially the world-famous Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau. The Niederhorn, our local mountain, is also very well known, especially for hiking in summer and winter. "top view in pure nature" that's the advertising slogan of Beatenberg and this is perfectly true.

Tell us about the local school where you children attend.

In the canton of Berne the children have to go to the kindergarden for two years. After these two years, they attend the primary school for six years. Then they go to the

secondary school for three years. So our children attend school for 11 years. We are lucky that we still got a school in our village because there are fewer children than 40 years ago. In Beatenberg are two school buildings, one in Spirenwald and one in Waldegg.

Tell me about your dairy farm.

We have 23 cows, we milk. and about 14 young cows, who hadn't had their calves and 11 calves. Our farm is about 23 hectares big. We sell the milk to the local hotels and restaurants as well as to a bigger company, who then produces yogurts and cream and so on.

Why is it called Habernhaus?

We don't know why it is called Habernhaus. It just simply always was.

How big is the farm?

Our farm is 23 hectares big. At the moment we have 48 cattle. Because we live at 1200 metres above sea level, we can't grow potatoes and other vegetables or fruit, but we make hay and silo our own. We don't have any employees. We run the farm ourselves. Our children help a lot. In summer, my grandparents and the brother of Ueli and his wife with the children help us. Without them, it would be almost impossible to do all the work.

What special efforts do you need to make in order to farm on the side of a mountain?

Where we live, we have the problem of the steepness. We need special machines, which can drive when it's very steep. In addition, we have to do more work by hand, than the farmers on flat land. Especially in summer 2014, when it was very wet, we had to do a lot more work by hand.

In our region, the fields are a lot smaller than on the



flat land. In the middle of the fields or around the fields are a lot more trees. So we do have more forest in the upper regions. That means we have to clean the land from the lawn in autumn by hand. In summer, we have to put the grass, silo and hay about two metres away from the trees by hand because the tractor can't reach it. We have to rake leaves and hay away from the corners.

Furthermore, we can't cut the grass with the tractor, because it is too steep. We have a special machine I think it is called mower (a big one) in English. My husband has to walk behind the mower and it cuts the grass in front of him. A special equipment is also the "Rechen" (in German) [a rake], which the flat-land farmers don't use.

In a summer with a lot of rain, as in 2014, we have to do more work by hand than normal, because we can't drive on the wet and steep ground. For example, we have to carry the hay to the next place (usually a street) where it is not so steep.

Our tractors are a "Schiltrac 2068" and a "Antonio Carraro TTR 6400." [See pictures]

What is the festival where your cow recently won a prize?

That was the festival for farmers, which takes place every year at the end of October. It's a special festival to compare the cows between farmers in Beatenberg. All the cows get points for their look. There are different kinds of festivals in Beatenberg. Most of them are organized by different local clubs.

When the Smucker Tour visited in October, you mentioned that there were several different Schmöcker families in Beatenberg including your husband and his siblings? Are your husband's siblings still in Beatenberg?

Yes, there are the Scchmocker's who originally come



from Ringgenberg and the others from Beatenberg. Three of his five siblings still live in Beatenberg.

What other Schmöcker families are in Beatenberg?

Two other families we know live in Beatenberg at the moment. One is related to us (more than one generation back) the other we don't know exactly if they are related, as we don't have any family tree and it's a bit difficult to get them in Switzerland.

What part of Beatenberg is called Schmöcken?

Schmöcken is the west part of Beatenberg, where we live.

What does "Schmöcken" or "Schmöcker" mean?

Sorry, but we don't know this.

In recent years, Americans do a lot of research on their family history. Does your family know their ancestry in Beatenberg?

We don't know our ancestry. We only know three or four generations back. It isn't very common in Switzerland to do family research, because it's complicated to get some information of our community because of the data protection. If we want to know more about our family we have to go to registry office and search in books to get some information. Furthermore, we have to pay for this. Unfortunately, we hadn't time to go to the registry office to do some research.

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the tiny basement window you crawled out of, making everyone else go first. I've stood next to that window as my father stood by me and mused, "Do you think you could fit through that window, Em?" And I'm not sure that I could, especially after the night you had and wearing a long dress.

And I wonder now history will choose to remember me? I cannot know but I know how I will choose to remember you.

I will remember your home, Anna, as the place where all the young people met to make apple schnitz and cider the night before the killings. I will remember you as the hostess who made everyone comfortable at the party – a crowd of hard-working pioneers on the frontier, taking the well-deserved break from working alone to work together.

I will remember you as the one who spent the day preparing food over an open fire, scrubbing the wooden floors. The tragedy of a sparkling clean house burning to the ground is small in the grandness of the larger tragedy, but it's not one that is lost on me Anna. That small tragedy is not lost on me.

I will remember you as the mother whose oldest daughter Barbara chose to homestead close to you, a daughter who slept through that night beside her new husband, belly swollen with your first grandchild. Your daughter Barbara, my six times great grandmother, doubled over in grief upon finding you slain the next morning.

I will remember you as a mother who spent all night with your husband and three children in the basement, pouring apple cider on the burning embers that fell through the floorboards. And I wonder, did you pull the fabric of your long skirts up to shield your six year old daughter's face from the smoke? And did you wrap yourself around her and rock and pray?

There is a fear too great for tears, the kind of terror I have never known. And this is how I'll remember you Anna Burki Hochstetler, as your blood lives on through me.

This is how I'll remember you.

Great Grandmother Anna by Emily Smucker Beidler

If I could talk with my Great Grandmother Anna Hostetler Smucker:

(family line Christian I-John – Christian III – David – Jonas – John)

You look directly into the camera in this picture, shoulders squared, wearing a button down dress with a round collar that you probably made yourself. You sit beside my great grandfather, John Smucker on this, your 50th wedding anniversary. You both wear quiet smiles and tiny wire-rimmed glasses.

But your eyes hold a sharpness, an alertness, that his do not – as if you're protecting something - and I wonder if your eyes always held this kind of watchful gaze.

You lost your hearing in your thirties, my father told me. You pronounced some words funny, like "applesass" instead of "applesauce." You became an expert at lip reading in the days before hearing aides. You would complain if you couldn't "hear" the preachers on Sunday morning, if the pulpit was too high to see their mouths or the preacher too short.

And I wonder about that silent world you lived in, if you would walk out of that enormous white clapboard Oak Grove Amish Mennonite Church at mid-day on Sundays, the din of conversation all around you but you – wrapped in silence.

And I wonder if you would peel yourself away from the company of darkly dressed farm wives standing in front of that white church house and steal away to the cemetery, stepping past aunts, uncles and neighbors who had long ago passed – until you reached your son's grave.

Elam, the melancholy son who ended his life when he found himself still a bachelor after all his younger brothers had married. And somehow I feel that despite your deafness, you heard his sorrow...your second son, the one who was next in line for the family farm.

And I wonder, did you kneel down in your Sunday clothes on the grass to carefully tend the Varigated Toad Belly you planted around his grave, that hearty succulent you chose that would live some 60 years later? I imagine you there, plucking out the dark green shoots that threatened to steal its vibrant color.



EUROPEAN MENNONITE HERITAGE TOUR

SEPTEMBER 7-21, 2017

The snowy Alps in Switzerland are breathtakingly beautiful—and one of our breakfasts is up here in a revolving restaurant!

Lemar and Lois Ann Mast, Editors and Publishers of *Mennonite Family History* and Tour Guides for the Smucker Family Heritage Tour to Europe in October 2015, are leading this tour in September 2017.

Request a free itinerary by writing to mast@masthof.com or call 484-798-8556.

This 15-day tour to Switzerland, Germany, and France, on September 7-21, 2017, will take us to the countries where our Anabaptist ancestors lived before coming to America, at a beautiful time of the year with many blooming flowers in the Swiss chalet flowerboxes!



- Ride down the Rhine River as our ancestors did on their way to America.
- Worship at the oldest Mennonite Church in the world.
- Meet Swiss and Germans—perhaps even distant cousins.
- Enjoy the unique *Alpabfahrten* as the cows come down the mountains.
- Sleep high up in the Alps and eat in a revolving restaurant
- Explore castles at Thun, Trachselwald, and also castle ruins
- Hear Regula Fankhauser's inspiring story at the *Täuferversteck*
- Enjoy opportunities to hike short or long distances

*Left: A highlight of our trip will be the special **Alpabfahrten** when the cows are brought down off the high Alpine pastures and paraded through the towns in Switzerland. Many good memories as we walked where our ancestors walked!*



*We climb to the top of the **Trachselwald Castle** tower to see where Anabaptists were imprisoned in the 1500s.*



*It is a solemn moment to consider placing one of our group into the stocks in an old prison cell at **Trachselwald**.*



***Flower boxes** abound in Germany!*

SSS Family Association

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**MEMBERSHIP IN THE
SSS FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

Our SSS Family Association was duly constituted with the creation of our constitution in March of 1985. Article IV (Membership) states that, " Membership is granted at one of the five year meetings, making a contribution, or paying for a subscription to the Newsletter. One of these acts must be continued every five years to be a member.

If you did not attend the 2016 SSS FamilyGathering in Kidron, Ohio, or have not made a contribution in the past five years, please make adonation of at least \$10.00 payable to the SSSFamily Association. Mail your donation to:Darrell Smucker, Treasurer, SSS FamilyAssociation, 1497 Morgan Street, Wooster,Ohio, 44691-1541.