

Opening remarks

This is the third time the Yoders of North Carolina have sponsored a National Yoder reunion. I well realize the amount of hard work which is involved. And I can't begin to say enough to thank our southern cousins for this wonderful gift to us all.

This time it is especially meaningful because we have the clearest view in almost 300 years of the connections of the early Yoders to one another.

Cover

Good afternoon. Dr. Yoder told about what is probably the most historic re-discovery in the past 300 years of Yoder history. We at the Yoder Newsletter are celebrating a milestone of a somewhat lesser note, our 30th anniversary in print. So I decided I'd give you an overview of these last 30 years, what we knew then and what we've learned, and some of the people along the way who have helped.

Overview:

I'll tell about the Newsletter, about the family name, the European research, the major American lines and growth of our family in America, and some of the Yoder events since 1983.

30 Years

Here you see our first issue in 1983, and our most recent one. How many are subscribers? Thank you. For those of you who are not subscribers, I have some copies of our 30th anniversary issue that you are welcome to pick up after the presentation.

The Beginnings

I had developed an interest in the history of the Yoder family years ago and in the 70s had the chance to begin doing some research into my own family when my wife and I lived in Pennsylvania. After two children and moving around a bit with my job, we found ourselves in Battle Creek Michigan. At that time a company named "Beatrice Bailey" was publishing a "Yoder Book" , which

ended up being little more than a collection of Yoder names and addresses from phone data bases.

I was very curious about all the different branches of the family, and I saw these addresses as an opportunity to begin contacting Yoders across the country. So I wrote to Rachel Kreider, a recognized Yoder scholar. She and her husband were about to move from Ohio to a retirement community in Goshen Indiana, not far from us, and she knew of a retired school principal living there named Ben Yoder who had a similar interest to my own. After she was settled in, we got together at her kitchen table in Goshen. With her help and knowledge Ben and I put together an initial issue and sent out several thousand copies over the space of the next several months, along with a family history sheet which people could fill-out and return. That was the beginning.

I'd like to introduce you to our staff...

Rachel

First off Rachel, our senior editor. She began collecting Yoder data with her Uncle John Weaver in the 1930s. In the 50s she wrote an article about the St. Joder Chapel for a Mennonite magazine, has written books on Ohio Mennonite cemeteries and with Dr. Hugh Gingrich, in 1986 published what is the authoritative book on the Amish family histories - "Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies". She has been the "go-to person" on Yoder genealogy for many many years. Now 103 years old, she has slowed down a bit in her envelope stuffing, but still proofs the draft of each issue to catch my typographical or grammatical errors.

Ben Yoder

The co-founder of the newsletter.... He loved the human interest fun stories about the Yoders, while I've always focused on harder facts and solving mysteries. For the first ten years of the Yoder Newsletter, we would meet at his kitchen table with scissors and glue, and put together each issue over the space of a Saturday's effort. It was a tremendous loss of a partner and friend when he died just short of our 20th issue at the age of 80 while my family and I were living and working in Saudi Arabia.

John W, Yoder

Not long before his death, Ben had wisely recruited some younger help. John W. Yoder of Middlebury, came on board to help us maintain the subscriber information and generate our mailing labels for each issue. He quickly stepped in to keep things going, and I was able to prepare the newsletters by long distance and get them to our printer in Goshen without interruption. John has continued as our Circulation Manager for over 20 years and I'm so glad he and his family are with us today. John..

Esther

Esther Yoder, who I first met at the 1995 Yoder reunion here in Hickory, had with her husband been active in building of the House of Yoder in Grantsville. Soon after our meeting, they moved to the Mennonite retirement center in Goshen and she took over the role of managing our mail, both incoming and outgoing.

Donald Kauffman

In the 90s the technology of things changed, and the newsletters could be composed in Microsoft Word and emailed to the printer.

We also started putting our accumulated files of Yoder data on-line, uploading records to a server in Santa Barbara, California. We decided what we needed was an actual web page, so a call went out in 1996 for a volunteer webmaster. Answering the call was Donald Kauffman of Edmonton Alberta.

Don is also the creator of the "Mennobits" research tool of collected Amish and Mennonite obituaries now maintained by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.

So that's our staff today... all volunteers.

The Yoder name

Historians trace the surname Yoder to St. Theodorus, "Joder" a missionary monk who brought Christianity over the Alps from Italy in the 4th century AD. In 1483 the chapel pictured here was dedicated to him, and was refurbished in the last century by European Joders. In 1981 Luxembourg issued a stamp to commemorate the 1600th anniversary of his appointment as

bishop. The Swiss Reformed Church celebrates Aug 16 as "St. Joder's day" so naturally we American Yoders do too. Greeting cards can be downloaded and printed or emailed from the Yoder website, and we have a new contest going to add more cards to the selection.

Meaning of the name

The name comes from the greek- Theos meaning God and doron meaning gift. So I hope all you spouses of Yoders are appropriately appreciative of your gifts... I know my wife sometimes is not.

What we Knew

When we started the newsletter, we knew about several main lines of Yoders in America.. Only the first Yoders, who settled in the Oley Valley of Berks County had their connection established to the Old World. Next were the Menonite Yoders of Buck Lehigh co Pa, and in 1742 a large family of Amish Yoders. In the mid century Conrad Yoder arrived and within a few years moved to NC to begin the line of our hosts today. In the 1800s a score or more of other Yoder immigrants made their way to America from Alsace and Germany. Where did we come from?

In Switzerland

- **“"The Swiss encyclopedia locates our "ancient family" in the village of Steffisberg in the canton of Bern in the 14th century. At Steffisberg the Joders began to appear in the records as early as 1529 and at Muri slightly later."**

European Resaerch

We are all very indebted to European researchers Karl Joder and Otmar Jotter who over 30 years ago studied, collected, and shared information about our early Joders.

Lineage

They pieced together a Joder lineage going back to the 13th century.. which was about the time in Europe that surnames began to be used... I've show it on this chart and refer to it as "apocryphal" because when you are working with bits and pieces of church and other documentation, you have to make

assumptions when you claim relationships.... But in all likelihood many on this tree are actually ancestors of those in this room...of particular interest to American Yoders is the family of Caspar Joder who m. Margret Henning in 1596.

Caspar Family

Two children of Caspar have been a focus as the possible origin of American Yoder for many years. Jost Joder b. 1607 and his brother Niclaus b 1609...both married cousins named Ann Trachsel on Oc 14, 1642. The recent findings have confirmed that these were proper choices. Children from these two families left Steffisburg in the 1690s.

Joder Families in Europe

These Joders initially settled in Alsace and the German Palatinate. Some descendants remain in these areas today, others moved on to America.

American Yoder Immigrants

Here are the major batches of American Yoder, and I'll say a bit about each one. How many of you here today are descended from: The Oley Yoders? The Mennonite Yoders? the Conrad Yoder line? The Amish Yoders? The Melchior Yoders? The Alsatian Yoders? Any others?

Oley Valley

Our first Yoders were Hans and his brother Jost. They were grandsons of Niclaus Joder we talked about and were born in Steffisburg. In 1709 Hans left the German Palatinate for "the island of Pennsylvania" --- Dr. Don Yoder found the church record of this seen here through a German collaborator . Hans settled on his property in the Oley Twp of Berks Co Pa in 1714...300 years ago next year.

Oley Researchers

In addition to Dr. Yoder, we can credit a number of others, including: Dr. Peter Bertolet, a Yoder descendant who documented local history in the 19th century; Dick Yoder of Bechtelville, PA, who has done significant research into the land, church records, and wills of the Oley Yoder line, and has shared this all with the newsletter; and the late Walter and Mae Moore, who

researched the Jacob Yoder family of Lewisburg, PA...which is now proven to be connected to the Oley Yoders.

Reunion scenes

Here are some scenes from one of the national Yoder reunions hosted by the Oley Yoders.

Oley Yoder Chart

Here is a chart of the first two generations of the Oley Yoders. An estate settlement held in family hands for over 200 years was recently given to the Berks Historical Society and it allowed us to fill out the family details for immigrant Yost Yoder. Don Yoder wrote a major article on this find for newsletter 57.

Hans Yoder of Great Swamp

Hans Yoder "of Great Swamp" referring to the area in which he settled, was the next Yoder arrival that we know of. He settled in Bucks County Pennsylvania and was a Mennonite. The family kept this religious link for many generations as it spread from Bucks/Lehigh Cos in Pa into Ohio and Indiana.

Mennonite Yoder researchers

We can thank Ken Hottle for figuring out the early generations of this line. Richard Yothers, researched and documented the line of one of Han's grandsons who took on the spelling YOTHERS. Actress Tina Yothers of the TV show Family Ties is from this family. Leonard G. Yoder researched and documented the Ohio branch of the family in the 1940 and 1950s.

Hans Discovered

A couple years ago, the Yoder Newsletter hired a professional to research and transcribe Steffisburg Joder estate records held in Bern, and these let us correct the relationships between several families in the key emigrant Steffisburg generations. One was the family of Niclaus' son Caspar, who had children both in the Palatinate and remaining in Steffisburg. Caspar's son Hans, born 1677, was referred to by 1724 as "in some foreign country, moreover it is not know if he's alive"

Our Mennonite Hans

Our Mennonite Hans had been born "about 1680", was in PA before 1720, and his is the only known Yoder line in American to use the name "Caspar"- both in his children and grandchildren's generation, We believe it very likely this is the same fellow.

The Amish Yoders

Families of Christian and "the widow Barbara" Yoder (whose husband is said to have died at sea) arrived in Philadelphia, Sept 21, 1742. They settled in Berks County, PA further north of the Oley Yoders. Known Amish connections in the family of the Steffisburg Jost Joder are supported by DNA testing which points to the Amish Yoders as his descendants. I'll go into more detail about the Yoder DNA testing Sunday.

Amish Researchers

As the Amish tend to marry within the community, we have some excellent historical data and books on those families. Harvey Hochstetler wrote two large volumes in the early 1900s, and these have been augmented by many others. Most significant was the 1986 publication by Dr. Hugh Gingerich and our own Rachel Kreider of The Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies...which is an extensive outline of the Amish families through 1850.

Amish Scenes

Here are some Amish Yoder scenes from Berks County, where the Northkill congregation was our first community

Conrad Yoder of NC

Conrad Yoder is the forebear of our NC hosts. He arrived in 1746 in PA, and then moved on to NC in 1753, buying land here in 1763.

Conrad Researchers

We've heard about George M. Yoder and his grandson Fred Roy Yoder, who have done so much to document the family history. The late Hubert Yoder of Charlotte, and Anne McAllister, who authored a 2 volume history of Heinrich

Weidener, worked for years to unveil information on the family of sons who moved to Indiana, Tennessee, and Iowa.

Conrad Chart

Here's his chart. The NC Yoder book limits itself to sons John and David, whose families stayed in North Carolina.

The Mussbach Confirmation Record

This is the 1740 confirmation record from Mussbach Germany which Dr. Yoder spoke of Friday. It has provided the key to the mystery of Conrad's relationship to the Yoders of Steffisburg. By giving his age, we also are able to identify his year of birth as 1725.

Updating the NC Yoder Book

In the first sentence of his 1970 Yoders of NC book, Fred Yoder credits Dr. Don Yoder for his information on the Yoders in Europe, citing a pamphlet Don wrote in the early 1950s.

For several years, there has been talk of updating the book to include the other children and now we have these wonderful new discoveries on Conrad's origins.

Update part 2

Dr. Yoder has been preparing a new forward for the book, the original text has all been OCR'd and is ready to be worked with, the YNL has aggregated a starting point of information on the other lines. What is needed now is a project manager and some volunteers, to do further review of census and other records, formatting, and clean-up work for a new edition. I would hope that some of you within the Conrad family will step forward to take this on.

Melchior Yoder

We have learned over the years that Melchior Yoder was born in Weidenthal in 1736 to a Niclaus Joder, naturalized in America in 1765, and that he corresponded with Conrad Yoder in NC..

Researchers of Melchior

We first learned about Melchior through an article in YNL 3 by Dorothy Yoder Coffman. We also have Dorothy to thank for many of the early Yoder census transcriptions which are available on the Newsletter webpage. It is interesting to see that just at the time the Melchior-Conrad connections are becoming clear, the families have been connected in another way, with the marriage of Dorothy Yoder's granddaughter to a Conrad Yoder descendant!

Carl Yoders (with an S) worked for years to successfully establish the identity of his SW PA ancestor as a son of Melchior. And "Melchior Line Coordinator" Don Honeywell and his wife Grace have spent years of effort to build the most complete descendant information that we have for any of the immigrant lines. Don and Grace are here today....

Alsatian Yoder

The Alsatian Yoders started to come to the US in the 1800s, and arrived in NY, OH, and Indiana. These folks were Amish and while the French researcher who provided much of our data claims they link to one particular son of Jost of Steffisburg, we as yet have no evidence to prove this.

German immigrants

Other Yoders came in the 1880s from Germany- some of these were Amish, and had the Amish DNA profile (which I'll talk about on Sunday), and some did not.

Rose by any other name

I call this my "rose by any other name" chart. From the different family lines, all apparently originating with the Joder family of Steffisburg, we have descendants with the following spellings: Yoder, Yoders, Yother, Yothers, Youther, Yotter, Jotter, Joder, Ioder, Yoter, Yetter).

The Conrad Discovery

Dr. Yoder went into some detail about this wonderful discovery. Here you can see what it all means pictorially. (USE POINTER)

Oley immigrants Hans and Jost were the uncles of Conrad.

Conrad was the uncle of Melchior Yoder.

Don shared very interesting stories about various American cousins....one was Philip Lahr (c1734 -<1800), a son of Conrad's sister Maria.

Philip Lahr

Here we have a 1798 indenture signed by Philip Lahr, in which he undertakes a young servant girl for a term of 6 years

UNVEIL THE PICTURE- this document was sold several months ago on eBay, and I was lucky enough to spot it. I'd invite you all to come up at the break and take a look at his 214 year old signature and seal.

Yoder populations

How many are there of us and where do we live? Well, on this chart we trace the different spelling as they appear in the censuses to 1930. Almost half of us live in just three states.. PA, OH, and IN.(USE POINTER)

From the 1990 census we find that Yoder was the 1118th most common surname in the US -- representing an estimated 35,000 people.

2000 census

In the 2000 population census, we can see an increase. By then we had grown to be the 707th most common name, with a head count of 44,000. Perhaps we have our Amish cousins to thank for doing all the begetting that jumped our counts over 10 years. It will be interesting to see how we fare when the statistics from the 2010 census come out.

National Reunions

National Reunions-- The newsletter has been very pleased to have co-sponsored National reunions with the NC Yoders in 1995, 2000, and now 2012; with the Oley Yoders in 1996 and 2001; and in 2006 with the Yoder House at Grantsville, MD.

Pictures 1

Here are some photos from the 1995 reunion- who here attended that event?

Pictures 2

How about the 2000 reunion?

2014-300th anniversary

Two years from now will be the 300th anniversary of the Oley Yoder homestead in Berks County. Plans are underway by the Oley Yoders to host another national reunion, in commemoration of this milestone. The newsletter will give more information as the plans unfold.

YNL On the Web

I mentioned our webmaster, Don Kauffman, and his work. On our web pages we have family tree data, census records, church and civil records from America and Switzerland, old newsletters, and much, much more...

In 2010 we joined the "Facebook" world and today have almost 600 "friends" there...how many of you are on facebook? Have you all "liked" the newsletter?

House of Yoder

Ray Yount gave us a tour Friday of the House of Yoder.

Thanks to our hardcopy newsletter subscribers, we've had a kitty to do many things.. including mailouts for the national reunions, paying for some of the European research, and many DNA tests. We were also able to make substantial contributions to the building of the House of Yoder in Grantsville, and recently gave another \$500 for the refurbishing of its roof.

In Summary

In summary, here's what we look like.....30 years ago we were a bunch of lines leading up to question marks. There are still question marks, but the lines are much clearer, and we know we can truly call each other "cousin".

TALK THE CHART WITH POINTER

Steffisburg Joders- Nicolaus's descent- Josts- both proven and linked by DNA

Thank you Chart

In conclusion, I'd like to thank you all for your support of the Yoder Newsletter over the years, and for your attention this afternoon. Please enjoy the wonderful fellowship of all those here assembled thanks to the North Carolina Yoders.

May God continue to Bless you all, as he's blessed our family over the generations.