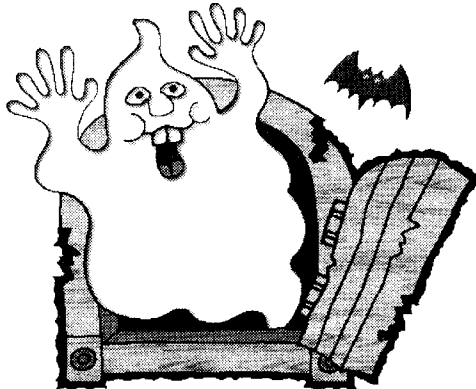




## THE YOST YODER GHOST STORY

*Published as "A Ghost Named Yost" From Ghost Stories of Berks County, with permission of Charles J. Adams III*



One of the primary ideas generated through religion is that we will all continue to live eternally, beyond our deaths as earthbound mortals. And so, if one is to be truly faithful, one cannot practically deny the existence of spirits. Furthermore, many classic "ghost" stories are deeply rooted in religion, or at least in the faith that our soul shall live on after our bodies expire.

Such is the case in the story of a ghost named Yost. Yost Yoder, to be precise. Yost Yoder of the Oley Valley who departed life in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, but whose spirit returned dramatically to a daughter years after his death.

For this tale, we turn to folklorist and author John Joseph Stoudt, PdD, who retrieved the story from a 1774 publication entitled, "Verschiedene Alte und Neuer Geschichten von Erscheinungen der Geister." The story is touted as coming from the lips of Elizabeth Yoder, daughter of Yost, who spoke with her father on August 14, 1743, more than two years after he died!

It is said that Yost was a kind man, and a thoughtful father. But before he could express certain feelings to Elizabeth, he passed away. This strong desire to speak again to his daughter and other children was, however, fulfilled that August morning.

Elizabeth woke with a strange feeling that day. She told her mother that she felt her father was trying to contact her. She described an uncanny fear of sorts, fear that her father was following close behind her. The eerie sensation accompanied her throughout the morning. Unable to explain the feeling, or gain a sympathetic ear from doubting family members, she tried her best to sort out the emotional trauma she was going through.

Elizabeth was overwhelmed by the prospect of chatting with her father. She was driven to put down her chores in the fields and yard and return inside the house. She followed this instinct and entered a side room. Her blood surged nervously through her body – she grew tense as she peered toward a bed in the room and had her suspicions confirmed. Sitting on the bedside was Yost Yoder, who had died two years ago.

"What are you doing, my child?" he asked in a friendly, quiet tone. Elizabeth was shocked. Any amount of emotional preparation she could have made for this moment could not have seen her through the initial encounter. She ran in terror to another room, where she collapsed to the floor in front of her mother. Mrs. Yost was frightened for her daughter's sanity and safety. She packed her off to a neighbor's house for a few days, in hopes that her fears would be allayed and the change of scenery would calm her and remove the thoughts of spiritual contact.

But the absence from her home only made her heart grow fonder for another meeting with her father. Four days later, she ran back home, back to the same side room. And there was her father.

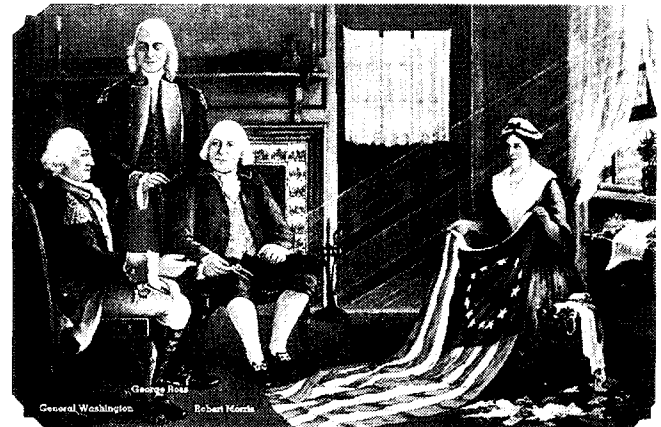
"What are you doing, my child?" Where are your brothers?"

"They are not here," she replied, regaining her composure.

(At this point the story begins to take a novel twist, and we begin to see why it was repeated in its time. I shall explain soon.)

Continued on Page 4

## THE YODER CONNECTION TO BESTY ROSS



In YNL 15 we told the story of how "Johnny Applesseed" spent time living as a guest on the Oley Yoder Homestead in Berks County, Pa. Yoder's "crossed paths" with a number of other historical figures to include that of the young lady who sewed the first American flag.

In his article *Early Furnaces and Forges of Berks County, Pennsylvania*, (Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. VIII, No. 1, 1884) historian Morton L. Montgomery writes:

*"The Oley forge was situated on the Manatawny Creek, about ten miles from its confluence with the Schuylkill, and about a half-mile south of the "Oley Churches." It continued in active operation for one hundred and twenty years.*

*"In 1744 John Ross, gentleman, of Philadelphia, and John Yoder and John Leshar, of Oley, entered into a joint partnership for erecting a forge for manufacturing pig metal into bar iron. They then purchased from Sebastian Graeff a tract of one hundred and ninety-seven acres of land, situated in Oley Township, on the Manatawny Creek, adjoining lands of Robert Stapleton and John Yoder, and the "Great Road" leading to Philadelphia; and thereon erected a forge, constructed a water pond, water courses, and the necessary buildings, and supplied the utensils for the business of making bar iron; and they also purchased warrants for taking up land on the hills adjacent to the forge in order to supply it with charcoal. In 1750 John Yoder sold to John Leshar his one-third interest "of said tract and of the forge, working gears, tools, implements, dams, etc." Leshar and Ross held their respective interests in the forge till Ross's death."*

Frederick Spang obtained an interest in the forge in 1794, later taking it over in full, and his son and grandson operated the property for seventy years, until the end of the Civil War.

John Yoder (OH1) (1700-1779) was the son of Oley Yoder immigrant Hans, and nephew of the Yost featured in the ghost story which appears in this issue. His partner Col. John Leshar was also his son-in-law, having married his daughter, Maria Johanna, on Sep. 25, 1740. John Leshar (1711-94) was a member of the Constitutional Convention of Berks County, 1776; and also Commissary and member of the General Assembly. He was born in Holland and died in Berks County, Pa. His wife Maria died in 1762 and Col. Leshar married again the following year.

The records of Berks County show: (Deed Book B-1, p 486) *"Indenture made the 14th day of February 1750 between John Yoder of Oley in the County of Philadelphia miller and Barbara his wife of the one part and John Leshar of same ironmaster of the other part and John Ross of Philadelphia the said John Yoder and John Leshar and John Ross in about 1742 did mutually enter a partnership in erecting and building a forge for the manufacturing of pigg metal into barr iron, each of them being one third part in persurance of which partnership the said partners did purchase 197 acres in 174\_ as tenants in common upon which land sd. Copartners did erect and build a forge and did purchase woodlands on the hills adjacent for the use of the forge..."*

Continued on Page 5

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The Yoder Newsletter- Founded 1983 by  
Ben F Yoder (1913-1992), Chris Yoder & Rachel Kreider  
FROM THE EDITORS

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\*\*\*\*\*

SEND YNL CORRESPONDENCE:

- FOR CIRCULATION ISSUES ONLY such as new or renewed  
subscriptions, changes of address, orders for back issues to: Yoder  
Newsletter, P.O. Box 594, Goshen, IN 46527-0594.

- ALL OTHER CORRESPONDENCE- Dealing with ancestral  
queries or contributions for future YNLs or archives (such as reunion  
notices, letters to the Editor, copies of Bible records or other historical  
information) to: Chris Yoder, 203 Lakeshire Rd., Battle Creek, MI  
49015 (or by electronic mail to "75757.3371@compuserve.com").

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YNL PRICE INFORMATION SSSS (Price nnnchanged since 1983!)

-The YNL subscription is on an annual basis-two issues for \$3.

-BACK ISSUES of the YNL are \$1 per issue.

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**HARDBOUND YNL OUT OF STOCK-IF YOU'VE ASKED TO BE  
ON THE WAIT LIST, PLEASE RESUBMIT YOUR NAME!!** (We  
lost email files due to a computer burp!) The last few remaining copies  
of the hardbound YNL Back-issues are exhausted. BACKORDERS  
are being taken (without deposits) and when a sufficient volume exists  
to launch a reprint, you will be contacted and offered a "pre-  
publication price" to help fund the basic costs of reprint. The Yoder  
Newsletter Issues 1 Through 25 - bound 240-page volume includes a  
topical index of major articles, and an "every name index". Send your  
reserve order to Chris Yoder at the email and regular address above.  
It may be several years until sufficient orders are assembled to launch  
a reprint.

\*\*\*\*\*

**YODER DATA ON DISK:** 17 MB of Yoder data is now available on a  
CD-ROM. Included back issues of YNL text, census and county  
records, family group data and pictures and scanned images. The  
price for our "Yoder Data on Disk" is \$10 (postage included). Send to  
YNL address in Goshen.

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**ORDER THE YODERS OF NC BOOK:** The History of the Yoder  
Family in North Carolina by Dr. Fred Roy Yoder has been reprinted  
and is available once more!! Funds raised will be used to restore old  
Yoder gravestones and up-keep of cemeteries at Churches significant  
to the Yoder Family and the ancestors of the Author. Price \$25  
(postage included). Send checks to : "Yoder Memorial Fund" at:  
Yoder Family in North Carolina, c/o: Bill Yoder, 2707 Zion Church  
Rd. Hickory, NC 28602

\*\*\*\*\*



FOUR GENERATION PHOTO - Taken in 1943. Right to left, Elmer  
Grant Yoder (1869-1951) (YR12a369), Wayne Yoder (1897-1981),  
Gordon Yoder Sr. (1919- ), Gordon Yoder Jr. (1939- )

Letters to the Editor

I am quite interested in the Pickaway Co research that was  
reported by Carl Catherman. I am very interested in both Melchior  
Yoder Jr and Melchior Sr. for two reasons. Christian Gruber is my  
4th great grandfather, and I have long shown him as marrying a  
Catharine Yotter as his third wife, on November 29, 1831 in Pickaway  
Co., OH. I have always assumed that she was connected to the Snyder  
Co. Yoders, as my Christian Gruber was there in 1786 alongside  
Adam Bolender/Polender. If I read the information correctly, Carl's  
work in Pickaway Co. establishes that Catharine Yotter was widow of  
Adam Bolender and Magdalena Morr. My Christian Gruber 1767-  
1842) was married first to Catharine Metzger, then 2nd to Elizabeth  
Betsy Ruble, then third to Catharine Yotter before his death June 15,  
1842 in Washington Twp., Pickaway Co. I show no children by his  
marriage to Catharine Yotter.

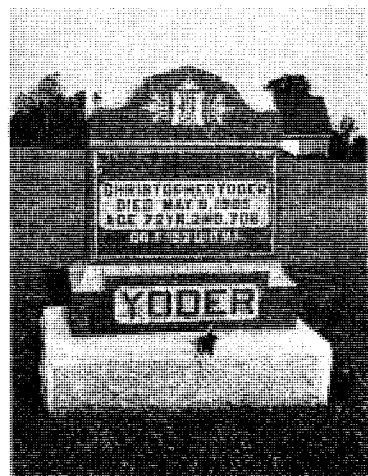
Melchior Yoder, Senior (presumed grandfather to Catharine  
Yotter?) was the immediate neighbor to John Rush in Middle  
Creek/Penns Twp, Snyder Co in the 1770s-1790's; I believe John Rush  
to be my 5th great grandfather on my mother's side. On his death, the  
estate of John Rush was divided and included a grant of land through  
son Daniel Rush to the "Middle Creek Society," trustees Melchior  
Yoder, John Yoder, Peter Godshall and Samuel Myers. This land was  
to preserve the Rush cemetery at Globe Mills and set aside additional  
land for the construction of a school and meeting house, which later  
became Zeibers Church at Globe Mills. John Rush was also a close  
neighbor of Adam Polender in the 1790 census of Norhtumberland Co  
(present day Snyder Co.). I have also been trying to establish whether  
this John Rush might in fact be related to near neighbor George  
Casper Roush, whose son John George Roush married Cristina Morr,  
sister to Magdalena Morr. I would be very happy to communicate /  
share notes about Gruber / Yoder / Bolender / Rush. Many thanks!  
John Gruber, Ardmore, PA, [JWGruber@msn.com](mailto:JWGruber@msn.com)

After reading Ben Yoder's email on the Yoder-listserver (about  
various St. Joder's stories), it brought to mind something that  
happened at the last Yoder reunion I went to. Whenever I go to any  
of our family reunions, I always take a copy of that family's genealogy  
with me. (I have done them all). Included in this genealogy is a copy  
of the story of St. Joder and the Devil.

When I told the story to my cousin, he couldn't believe it. He  
asked his wife to get the statue they had purchased on their last trip to  
Europe. They said they were in a small shop and saw this statue, they  
liked it and bought it. All they knew was that it was a saint of some  
kind, and the Devil. It is carved out of some kind of dark wood with  
a lot of detailing and a very beautiful piece of art, and stands about 10  
inches high. As soon as I saw it, I knew it was St. Joder and the Devil,  
it looks just like the pictures I have seen with St. Joder standing over  
the Devil and his foot holding him down.

Now, talk about a coincidence. My cousin (actually my cousin  
once removed) Allen Reed, is the youngest son of Bertha Yoder, who  
is the youngest daughter of William John Yoder (YR23b446). Allen  
had never heard the story of St. Joder. --- Kaye Strause  
[jkstraus@bellsouth.net](mailto:jkstraus@bellsouth.net)

\*\*\*\*\*



Christian (Christopher)  
(YA53) (3/1/1835 NY -  
5/8/1908 72y 2m 7d) single  
GAR Co F 152 OVI bur.  
Yoder (Pitsenbarger)  
Cemetery, Wayne Twp,  
Darke Co., OH (s/o Joseph  
Yoder b 6/5/1807 Belfort,  
Fr. m 10/5/1829 Fr. Anna  
Kloppenstine. Photo by  
Wally Garchow, visit:  
<http://album.dcoweb.org/yoder/>

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**A YODER APPEARS IN BEIRUT LEBANON**

Thanks to Jeremy Koons, Department of Philosophy, American University of Beirut, Lebanon ( <http://webfaculty.aub.edu.lb/~jk09> ) For reporting the following: "On the wall of the TGI Friday's in Beirut, Lebanon, is a high school diploma (1916) for John Geist Yoder. Wondered if he is a relative, and thought you might be interested to know how far one of his possessions has managed to travel."

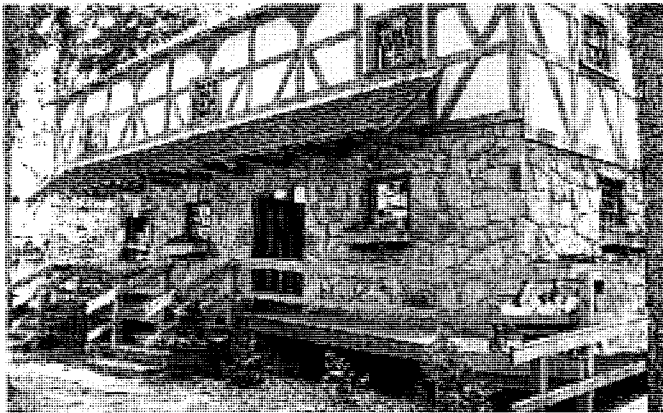
Research by the Yoder Newsletter suggested this fellow might be: OH1338945- John (b. Jan 1896) res. New Kensington, Pa., son of OH133894- William Henry Yoder (3/20/1863- 2/ /1933 ) m. Cora Parantha Geist. William Henry was a grocer of DuBois, Clearfield County, PA.

Jeremy replied: "I had another look at the diploma, and it is from New Kensington High School, New Kensington, PA. The graduation date is 24th May 1916. I guess whoever buys Americana-style memorabilia for the walls for the various TGIFridays must have picked the diploma up at an estate sale or antique shop. Thus did John Geist Yoder's diploma make it to Beirut." As the Arabic expression goes, "Alhamdulillah". (Praise be to God).

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**YODER AGGRIEVED IN NY TIMES SCANDAL**

The recent series of scandals at the New York Times with plagiarism or "made up" articles, have now expanded to include a Yoder as one of the aggrieved parties. It was announced in May 2003 that Pulitzer Prize winning reporter Rick Bragg had been suspended for two weeks, after filing a story on struggling oystermen in Apalachicola, Fla. The story had been primarily written by J. Wes Yoder of the Anniston (Ala.) Star, a freelance reporter, who the Times said should have shared the byline with Mr. Bragg.

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**Yoder House Update**



The eighth annual meeting of House of Yoder, Inc., will be held at the Yoder House in Grantsville, Maryland on Saturday, November 8, 2003 from 10 a.m.-12 noon. The featured speaker will be Nathan (Nate) Yoder, a native of Grantsville. Yoder is Assistant Professor of Church History and Director of the Master of Arts in Religion program at Eastern Mennonite Seminary in Harrisonburg, Virginia. An ordained minister, he has been teaching in the seminary since 1994. Dr. Yoder has served as a member of the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church and also has served a term as president of Shenandoah Valley Mennonite Historians. He is currently involved in the development of the Valley Brethren-Mennonite Heritage Center in Harrisonburg, Virginia. All interested persons, especially those with the Yoder name and/or Yoder ancestry, are welcome at the annual meeting.

The construction on the Yoder House is almost complete. Over \$70,000 in gifts as well as countless hours of volunteer labor has been given during the past decade to make the Yoder House dream a reality. Approximately \$10,000 in additional gifts to the project will bring the construction to completion (\$5000 for lighting and other necessary fixtures and \$5000 to finish the hosting center on the lower level of the house). Contributions may be sent to and memberships obtained by contacting: Lonnie Yoder, 1066 Smith Avenue, Harrisonburg, VA 22802; 540-432-6467; or [ltbyoder@adelphia.net](mailto:ltbyoder@adelphia.net).

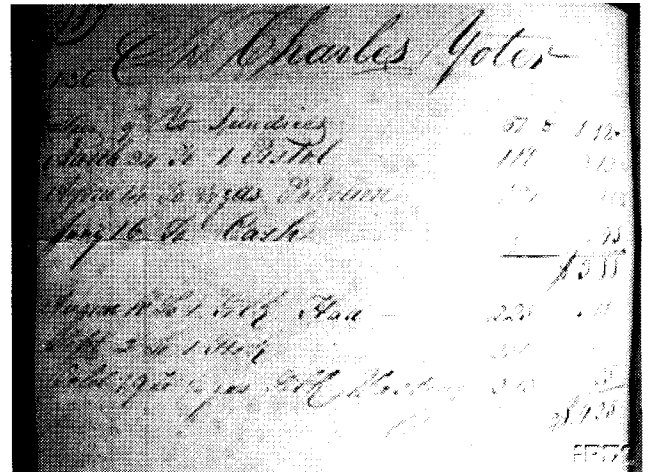
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**PHOTO CORNER--YODER PHOTOS WANTED!!!** We are continuing to collect family photos. Practical limitations on our web server will limit what we can display there, but the capabilities to assemble and include data on a CD ROM are significant. We'd like your help in beginning to build these pictorial files of families. If you have access to scan photos and then email them to me at the following address: [75757.3371@compuserve.com](mailto:75757.3371@compuserve.com).

For now I'd like to limit things to pre-1920 Yoder family group photos, photos of individual Yoders who may have been born before 1860, or photos of pre-1830 Yoder homestead structures. Include with your photo a short paragraph of narration.



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**JOYCELYN Z. YODER (YR23331b) FAMILY**, taken about 1886. From the left, Jocelyn Z. holding Jocelyn Paul, b. 1884; to his left in back row are Bessie Lee, b. 1874 and Bertha Alice, b. 1876. Seated in front center is Marion Elinor, b. 1879; and Phoebe Ellen Tallman Yoder, right holding Melvia Ethel, b. 1881. (Contributed by Paul E. Sangster, Flagstaff, AZ) (Jocelyn Z. was the brother of Congressman S.S. Yoder, see YNL 8)

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**"YOTERS" LISTED IN 1836 LEDGER**



Copied from an 1836 store ledger in the Schuylkill/Northumberland County Pa. area. The above shows the purchases of Charles Yoter. Actually there are two Yoter's listed in the ledger. Charles Yoter and Peter Yoter. The "DR" that is written in front of his name doesn't stand for doctor, but rather "debtor". It's interesting that Charles Yoter purchased a pistol and it is noted that Peter Yoter purchased a breast plate. The YNL believes these folks are likely the sons of Jeremiah Yoder (OH1334).

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**GIVE A YNL SUBSCRIPTION FOR XMAS!!!** 

Continued from Page 1

The father-spirit continued: "I left the world so quickly, without speaking to you, but perhaps is it just as well. Now, obey your mother. Do not scorn or despise her. She is on the right road. And when she departs she will go to the right place. And the man: do not despise or scorn him. He is on the right road and preaches the truth."

"Which man?" asked Elizabeth.

"The Frenchman. Tell this to your brothers, your sisters, and all your good friends."

Still troubled by her father's reference to "the man," Elizabeth nonetheless assured her father that she would obey his instructions. She broke down in tears and asked why he had not returned sooner.

"The time is not yet come. I could not come sooner," he told her.

Elizabeth was told that all was well: "I am in a good place ... my brother is with me. It goes very well with us." But the spirit the offered some ominous thoughts: "Tell me, why did you run away yesterday? That was unnecessary. I am your dear father; why were you afraid? As you were frightened you shall have to bear severe illness - most severe. Death will approach you three times, you scarcely will survive. If you live, your life shall not be shortened because of it. Now I will depart and never return."

After those terse and frightening words, a most incredible display took place. As a strobe light would flash brightly in the darkness, a flash of black light split the daylight - and the ghost of Yost Yoder disappeared.

Now --- that "novel twist" I referred to. You'll notice that Yost referred to "the man" in his admonitions to his daughter. "The man...preaches the truth..." he said. "The FRENCHman," he asserted.

Dr. Stoudt, recounting the Yost Yoder story in a 1956 HISTORICAL REVIEW OF BERKS COUNTY article, theorizes that the "Frenchman" was none other than Dr. George DeBonneville, who came to the Oley Valley a year before the time of this story. It was a time of religious confusion in the area. Dr. Stoudt pointed to the breakdown of the Synods, the lack of credibility of the followers of Matthias Bauman and "raids made by the brothers from Ephrata on the Oley people." He said, quite simply, "the valley was the prey for any religious leader."

Apparently Dr. DeBonneville fashioned himself as a religious leader. He was also, it was recorded, a friend of the pioneer who published the Yost Yoder account. Dr. Stoudt concludes, "It does not take much historical imagination to suspect that probably the anonymous author of this story was DeBonneville, who perceived its value in helping to win converts by use of the bizarre and wonderful."

Perhaps, Dr. Stoudt. But then again.....

NOTE BY EDITOR: Of course we Yoders know that the star of this story is Yost Yoder (OY), who with his brother Hans were the first established Yoders in America, settling in the Oley Valley of Berks County, Pa. Yost was born 5 Oct 1679 in Steffisburg, Switzerland to Adam Yoder and Barbara Ochsenbein. We know from other sources that Yost died in 1741/2, about the same time as his brother Hans. The story above says he spoke to his daughter "August 14, 1743, more than two years after he died", perhaps establishing more closely the time at which he actually died. The wills for both brothers were filed in Philadelphia at the same time, January 14, 1742. Yost Yoder had made his will May 29, 1741. If the timing in the ghost story is true, the date of Yost's death can be narrowed to between May 29 and Aug. 14, 1741. (Hans's will had been made June 17, 1739).

Yost reports "I am in a good place ... my brother is with me. It goes very well with us." We are sure that the many descendants of both founders are very pleased to know they made it to heaven (which is what we assume he is describing).

When Yost endorses the preaching of the "Frenchman" he tells his daughter go "Tell this to your brothers, your sisters,....". From various records we know that Yost had sons John Yoder (1718-1812) labeled in our records as "OY1", Jacob labeled "OY4"(1735-c1803/4) about both of whom a fair amount is known. Another son was Samuel "OY3" ..... about whom much less is known. In 1738, Samuel appears as a witness, along with "Just Yodder", on a will filed for Peter Weisner. Peter G. Bertolet, MD in Fragments of the Past reported that Samuel lived near Lobachsville.

The only daughter whose name we have recorded is Elizabeth, the heroine of this story. She was born in 1720 (recorded as "OY2") and was the first wife of Lazareth Weidner, by whom she had 9 children. From this story, we know there were other "sisters" (plural).

At this time we do not know their names! Her father, the ghost, told her "As you were frightened you shall have to bear severe illness - most severe. Death will approach you three times, you scarcely will survive. If you live, your life shall not be shortened because of it." Elizabeth lived until Dec. 5, 1782 when she died "at 7am of dropsy" at age 62. She was buried Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>.

In YNL 5, Dr. Don Yoder refers to this story as follows: "This story appeared in a bestseller volume of ghost appearances, with religious commentary, published by Christopher Sauer in Germantown in 1744. It was reprinted in 1748, 1755, and 1792." Dr. Yoder is a cousin of John Joseph Stoudt who is referred to in the ghost tale.

(Ghost art supplied as freeware from D. Kennedy, © 1998)

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### Joseph W. Yoder's Rosanna of the Amish

The thrilling narrative of Rosanna McGonegal Yoder, the Irish Catholic baby girl, who lived with an Amish woman, Elizabeth Yoder. Centennial edition, 1995--Over 410,000 in print. Price: \$9.99 Order from Mennonite Pub. House. <http://www.mph.org/books/rosanna.htm> or at your local Provident Bookstore.

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## ELISABETH JODDER BAPTISMAL CERTIFICATE



The baptismal certificate pictured above is for Elisabeth Jodder, (M11 in the Melchior line). It can be seen on-line at: <http://home.att.net/~fraktur/jodder1795.html> . It's interesting she was baptized into the Lutheran church as a married woman, which is consistent with the Melchior line being Anabaptist. Here is the data from the fraktur: Taufschein: Elisabeth Jodder, daughter of Johannes Jodder and Catharina Herd. Born 1795 January 20 in Limerick Twp, Montgomery Co, Pennsylvania. Baptized 1819 April 9 by Rev J. C. Walter. (Note: The township and county are filled in by a different hand, with eccentric spelling, but I'm pretty sure Limerick and Montgomery are meant.) Below the normal infill area is the following information: On 1819 April 11 she received Holy Communion from the above-mentioned Reverend and became a member of the Lutheran Congregation. And she married Georg S. Hoch [or possibly Georg Shoch] on 1817 March 23.

Contributed by John Bieber [john@bxclu.bartol.udel.edu](mailto:john@bxclu.bartol.udel.edu)

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An "Abraham S. Yoder Directory" (YR257182) is now available, published by Rachel Shetterly. YR257182- Abraham Samuel (Abe S) (2/7/1878 Mexico, Juniata Co., Pa-3/23/1968) married 2/14/1908 MP Salome P Zook (1/14/1887-11/20/1971). Abe S. was a settler of Gosper County, Neb. and then went to Mifflin Co., Pa. to marry and raise his family. More details of the Gosper County settlement can be seen in the article by John Sharp at: <http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/Features/gospercounty.html> <http://www.goshen.edu/mcarchives/MHB/Sharp-Nebraska-Amish.html> For a copy of the directory send \$10 (postage included) to: Rachel Shetterly, 253 Mill Road, Millersburg, PA 17061. For questions, contact [rshetterly@adelphia.net](mailto:rshetterly@adelphia.net)

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Continued from Page 1

Witnesseth John Yoder and Barbara his wife for and in consideration of the sum of £500 pounds paid by the said John Leshner by these presents transfer grant sell their undivided one third part and share of the above delineated and described 197 acres and their undivided third part of all lands for the use of the forge.. and their undivided one third part and share of said forge working gears, tools, implements, water ponds, dams, water courses, buildings unto the said John Leshner ( now in his occupation)... Sealed and signed by John Yoder Recorded 24 May 1774"

Partner John Ross (1714-1776) was a one time Attorney General of Delaware. In 1743 he was a chief rival before the Pennsylvania courts of Alexander Hamilton. He was a friend and correspondent of Benjamin Franklin and an early member of the American Philosophical Society. During the revolution, he was a Tory, and was described by Alexander Graydon: "Mr. John Ross, who loved ease and Madeira much better than liberty and strife, declared for neutrality, saying that "let who would be king, he well knew that he should be the subject." This view was not universal within his family, however. John Ross's half-brother George and brother-in-law George Recd, were both signers of the Declaration of Independence. Other brother-in-laws, Edward Biddle, was also a member of the Continental Congress, and Brigadier-General William Thompson, was one of George Washington's aides-de-camp. John's nephew and namesake, John Ross, son of Aeneas Ross, did his patriotic duty in another way. In November of 1773 he eloped to New Jersey with young Betsy Griscom. Young John Ross was badly injured, reportedly in an explosion, he died soon after, leaving Betsy a young widow in January of 1776.

On the "Betsy Ross Homepage" at: <http://www.usbistory.org/betsy/> the story of the American flag is told:

"Betsy would often tell her children, grandchildren, relatives, and friends of the fateful day when three members of a secret committee from the Continental Congress came to call upon her. Those representatives, George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross, asked her to sew the first flag. This meeting occurred in her home some time late in May 1776. George Washington was then the head of the Continental Army. Robert Morris, an owner of vast amounts of land, was perhaps the wealthiest citizen in the Colonies. Colonel George Ross was a respected Philadelphian and also the uncle of her late husband, John Ross.

"Naturally, Betsy Ross already knew George Ross as she had married his nephew. Furthermore, Betsy was also acquainted with the great General Washington. Not only did they both worship at Christ Church in Philadelphia, but Betsy's pew was next to George and Martha Washington's pew. Her daughter recalled, "That she was previously well acquainted with Washington, and that he had often been in her house in friendly visits, as well as on business. That she had embroidered ruffles for his shirt bosoms and cuffs, and that it was partly owing to his friendship for her that she was chosen to make the flag."

"In June 1776, brave Betsy was a widow struggling to run her own upholstery business. Upholsters in colonial America not only worked on furniture but did all manner of sewing work, which for some included making flags. According to Betsy, General Washington showed her a rough design of the flag that included a six-pointed star. Betsy, a standout with the scissors, demonstrated how to cut a five-pointed star in a single snip. Impressed, the committee entrusted Betsy with making our first flag."

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**GIVE A YNL SUBSCRIPTION FOR XMAS!!!** 

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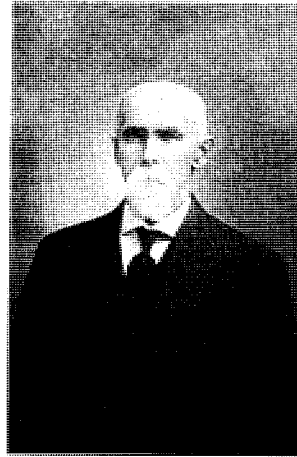
### A NOTE FROM THE OLEY YODERS

We had a successful July 2003 reunion. We had good fellowship, good food and an interesting speaker. Next years reunion will be held on Saturday, June 12, 2004, in conjunction with the reopening of the Pleasantville Covered Bridge. The bridge has been unusable for several years and it is being restored so traffic can again cross it. They're using as much of the old bridge as possible in the construction. We will be part of the celebration and will be selling wooden replicas of the bridge and also our memory books and t-shirts. More information will be forthcoming in the April YNL. Inquiries may be directed to Phyllis Yoder, 9 Yoder Drive, Shoemakersville, PA 19555-1417 or by e-mail to [PRY884@aol.com](mailto:PRY884@aol.com)

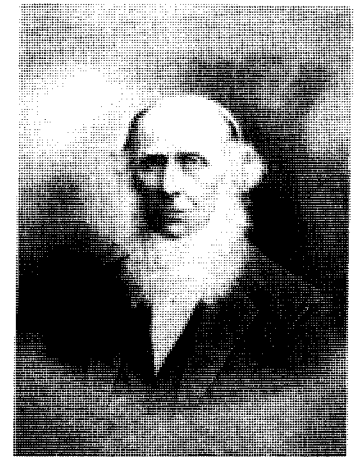
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## CORRECTION: JONATHAN YODER PHOTO



Jonathan Samuel Yoder  
1844-1906



Bishop Jonathan Yoder  
1795-1869

On page 6 of YNL 41, we identified the photo above on the left as being Bishop Jonathan Yoder (YR12a3), instead it was Jonathan Samuel Yoder (YR12a331). Jack M. Fosmark, has passed along a photo of the real Bishop Jonathan Yoder (1795-1869), which he subsequently received from James Grant Yoder. This photo is portrayed on the right above. Family historian James Grant Yoder, who states in part as follows:

"We had never had a portrait of Bishop Jonathan Yoder until May 2000, when our group of 15 Yoder cousins visited Illinois. In the Mennonite archives at Metamora we saw a large framed portrait that was identified as Bishop Jonathan, late in his life. ..."

Thanks to James and Jack for the correction!

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## CELEBRATING ST. YODER'S DAY



Contest winner Angela Ann Yoder, (YR2354681151), contributed a second card design for our set of available St. Yoder's day cards. This one commemorates the victory of St. Yoder over the devil. He tricks the devil into transporting a bell the Pope had given him to the church at Sitten. St. Yoder offered the devil a human soul if he could get the bell to the church by "cock's crow" (dawn). Just as they approached the church, St. Yoder uses his power to make the rooster crow early, and the devil loses the bet. This story is told in detail in the children's book "13 Jolly Saints" by Dorothy Gladys Spicer, published in 1970.

Both cards are available at the Yoder Newsletter homepage and may be accessed as either a link, or a "pdf" file which can be printed off and folded into a card for mailing. Counters on the two link sites show that almost 500 accesses occurred through the holiday season. **BEGIN YOUR PLANS NOW FOR YOUR NEXT YEAR ST. YODER'S CELEBRATION. ADDITIONAL CARD DESIGNS ARE WELCOME AND ALL WILL CONTINUE TO BE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE YODER HOMEPAGE** ([www.yodernewsletter.org](http://www.yodernewsletter.org))



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## JACOB YODER'S COAT

(An Heirloom of the Christian (Keifer) and Esther Hertzler Yoder Family)

--by Adella Kanagy, g-granddaughter of Jacob and Anna Yoder

The second daughter of Christian and Esther was Anna (1815-1887), married to Jacob Yoder (1812-1864). They probably began housekeeping at Jacob's home which was near Anna's parents' home in Menno Township, Mifflin County. Jacob and Anna later moved to Juniata County, then to Mahoning County, Ohio, then to St. Joseph's County, Michigan.



Of the other eight children of Christian and Esther Yoder, Lydia married to David Hertzler, Simeon H. married to Elizabeth Kanagy and later Rebecca Stoltzfus, Daniel C. married to Elizabeth Byler and later Barbara Glick, and Sarah married to Jacob Zook lived in Big Valley all their lives and have many, many descendants there, to the ninth generation. Elizabeth married to Stephen Kurtz moved to Lawrence County, his home. Christian married to Lydia Kurtz moved to Oregon. Abraham married to Fannie Kurtz moved to California. Moses H. married to Barbara Kauffman and later Elizabeth Slabaugh moved to Oklahoma.

Jacob's siblings were Magdalena, John K. who was a bishop at the Oak Grove congregation in Wayne County, Ohio, and Christian K who was a minister at West Liberty, Ohio.

It is important that descendants know that Jacob Yoder's coat is being preserved at the Mennonite Heritage Center in Belleville, PA. The coat is a valuable hand-made garment, of wool and cotton which was possibly dyed brown with walnut hulls. The hooks and eyes, the stand-up collar, and the frock tails preserve what was worn by Amish in Big Valley in the early 19th Century. The coat has considerable damage. It is kept now in a climate- controlled room.

The custodians, Zelda Yoder and Betty Hartzler, met with an expert in fabric preservation who examined the coat in detail to give estimates on cost of repairs. The repairs will be in stages and decisions on how much will be done depends on how much descendants or friends want to contribute.

The preservationist has "stabilized" the coat, by vacuuming and steaming to relax and reshape the fabric and supporting it on pillows in a custom-made, acid-free box. Her initial work was \$790.97, most of which has been covered by gifts and pledges. Her estimate for minimal repairs for museum exhibition of the coat is \$3,600. More comprehensive treatment of all significant areas of damage would be an additional \$2,400, and a disc torso form and stand for display would cost over \$500.

Contributions are welcomed for preserving the coat. It will be most valuable if it is restored to museum display condition. Gifts may be sent to the Mifflin County Mennonite Historical Society, P.O. Box 5603, Belleville, PA 17004. Then come to the Mennonite Heritage Center in Belleville to see this heirloom. (<http://mifflincomhs.mennonite.net/>)

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1844-MORE SUPPORT TO FREE ENTERPRISE

*Johannes Yoder*

In YNL 40 we highlighted a signature of Joshua Yoder (YR239a) b. 1812, which appeared on an 1840 petition in support of a tavern license for Jacob Brugh of Stony Creek Township, Somerset Co., Pa. Four years later, Johannes Yoder endorses the successful petition by Lewis Spangler who wishes to operate a tavern at his house in Shanksville, Pa. The Johannes (John) Yoder in the area at the time was YR239, father of Joshua. He was born 2/8/1772 in Berks Co., and died 12/1/1856. John took over the homestead in Somerset Co. from his father "Schwietzer Christian" Yoder.

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## NC YODERS UPDATE PROJECT CONTINUES!!

This multi-year project aims to bring the descendants of Conrad Yoder up to date and add lines from all over the nation. The help of all Conrad family members is needed to assemble current information. Noted historian Dr. Don Yoder has promised a major introduction to this revision on the history of the Yoder family. To help, contact: Bill Yoder, 2707 Zion Church Rd. Hickory, NC 28602 email: [byodernc@yahoo.com](mailto:byodernc@yahoo.com) or Chris Yoder at 203 Lakeshire Rd., Battle Creek, MI 49015. email: [cwyoder@tds.net](mailto:cwyoder@tds.net).

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## Amish and Amish Mennonite Genealogies Reprint

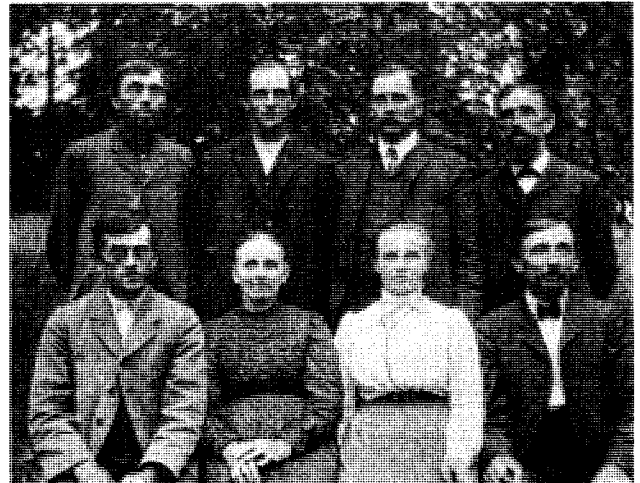
Gingerich, Hugh F., and Rachel W. Kreider. Amish and Amish-Mennonite Genealogies.\*\*\* 2d printing. Lancaster, Pa.: Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, 2003. 858 pp. \$70.00 (cloth). For mailed orders outside Pa., add \$6.50 postage/handling (\$76.50). For mailed orders in Pa., add 6% sales tax (\$81.09). Credit cards accepted. E-mail: [lmhs@lmhs.org](mailto:lmhs@lmhs.org) Phone: (717) 393-9745 Fax: (717) 393-8751

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## HANS YODER HOMESTEAD RECOGNIZED

The Berks County Pennsylvania Farm-City Council recently recognized the Hans Yoder (OH) Homestead, Oley Twp., as the longest standing farm under continual family ownership in the county. This property has been in the Yoder family since 1714. The next longest homestead was that of Jacob Kauffman, also Oley Twp. (a comparative youngster established only in 1727). During a commemorative banquet held at the Reading Sheraton, family historian Richard H. Yoder of Bechtelsville, Pa. accepted a plaque on behalf of the current owner, Richard A. Yoder.

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REUBEN YODER (YR2337a) FAMILY-, Photos taken at c1905 Reunion at Brethren Retreat Center, Lake Shipshewana, Indiana. PHOTO ABOVE, Reuben Children- Rear- Mose, Levi, Pete, Daniel; Front- Menno, Elizabeth (Miller), Mary (Powell), & Samuel. PHOTO BELOW- Family Group.



### 53rd NC Yoder Reunion

The parish building of the Zion Lutheran Church south of Hickory was the meeting site for the 53rd gathering of the descendants of Swiss immigrant Conrad Yoder. Approximately 107 persons were on hand August 10, 2003 for the annual get together.

The host pastor, the Reverend John N. Woodard, offered an invocation and table blessing. A variety of culinary creations from the kitchens of the renowned Yoder cooks tempted the taste buds and whetted the appetites of the hungry guests.

Vice-president Sarah Yoder Coffey presided in the absence of President Albert Yoder. The secretary gave a detailed account of the last meeting. The 2002 report was approved. Family treasurer Benelia Yoder Reese reported a balance of \$1541.15, as of August 10, 2003. During the afternoon business session an offering of \$283.00 was collected.

First time visitors included Ari Yoder of Manzanita, OR, a great-granddaughter of former Catawba County resident Michael Andrew Lee Yoder. Ari had also traveled the farthest to attend the NC reunion. Also attending for the first time were grandsons of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gallimore. The young men (Aaron and Andrew) live near Baltimore, MD.

Ovelia Yoder Phelps, 90, was the oldest guest. At eight weeks, MacKenzie Aaron Yoder, was the youngest participant. The child is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Lee (Amy) Yoder, Jr., of Sanford.

Sarah Coffey recognized newlyweds, Justin and Caron Weidner, who were married June 28, 2003. Caron is a daughter of the clan vice-president. Harry and Florence (Anthony) Gallimore of Newton were recognized for having been married 58 years.

Lucy Yoder with three children and one grandchild present had the distinction of being the parent with the most offspring on hand. Gerald Yoder was recognized as the senior member of a four-generation family attending the event.

Kathleen Yoder Rotert of Arlington, TX read from a 1950 letter penned by her late grandmother Hettie (Dietz) Yoder about life down on the farm. The document was from a memory album that Kathleen had created about the family of Mr. and Mrs. Enloe M. Yoder. Rotert's father, Richard E. Yoder, served many years as head of the local family.

Kendall G. Yoder spoke about his recent move to NC after living a number of years in Largo, FL. A son of Claude and Lelia (Baker) Yoder, Kendall shared early memories, including a first birthday party held on the Finger Bridge Road in rural Catawba County.

Ted M. Yoder reported that Rachael Hahn Kennedy was continuing work on the incorporation of the Yoder family. Details about a May 26-June 10, 2004, Pennsylvania German Heritage Tour being organized by retired history professor Dr. Don Yoder of Devon, PA, was announced.

Willie A. "Bill" Yoder encouraged the family to collect and forward their history revisions to Chris Yoder, editor of the Yoder Newsletter. The information is needed by December 31, 2003, if families wish their updates to be included in the proposed new Yoder history book.

Bill Yoder remarked that the fencing that surrounds the Conrad Yoder family cemetery will be repainted later in the year. Bill was thanked by Sarah Coffey for mowing the Yoder graveyard the past several years.

Former treasurer Gerald M. Yoder reminisced about the illness and death of his daughter, Mary Rose Morris. The oldest child of Gerald and Maynell (Bums) Yoder, Mary Rose died four years ago after enduring a brief bout with cancer. Yoder spoke of his love and admiration for his granddaughter, Karen (Perry) Norris, who, with her son, Jonathan, was visiting from their home in Overland Park, KS.

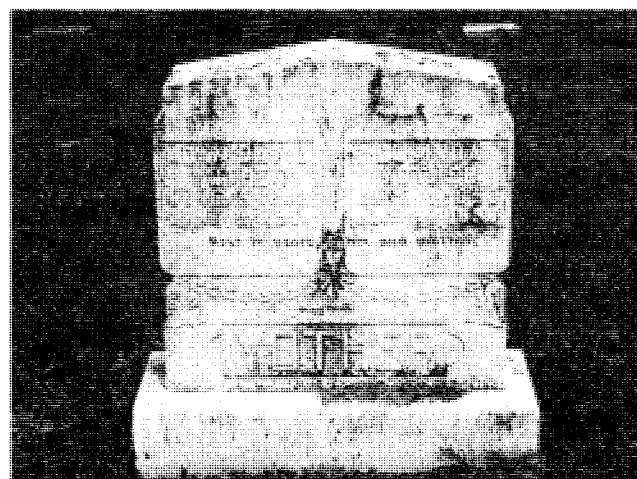
Gerald also related a tale about how his friend, Ovelia Yoder (Phelps), fell in the branch as a child and "got soaking wet." (Gerald Murray Yoder, a well-known spinner of folksy yarns at the NC reunions died unexpectedly August 26, 2003 at the age of 86 years.)

A benediction and closing prayer was tendered by Dr. J. Larry Yoder, a professor of religion at Lenoir-Rhyne College and pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in Newton. Family displays, exhibits, and heirlooms were shared by Michael Huffman, Ed Yoder, Ted Yoder, Kathleen Rotert, Bill Yoder, and Neal Wilfong.

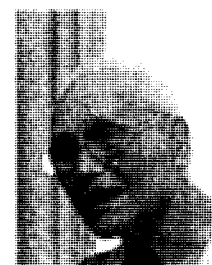
The next scheduled meeting of the NC Yoder clan is set for Sunday, August 8, 2004, at Zion Lutheran Church.—Respectfully submitted, Neal D. Wilfong, secretary

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GIVE A YNL SUBSCRIPTION  
FOR XMAS!!!

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ADAM DAVID YOTHER IN ALTUS, ARKANSAS



Adam David Yother (6/15/1848-6/5/1931) (Con825) was the son of George Yother, son of Adam Yother, son of Conrad Yoder the founder of the North Carolina line. Adam David married in Anderson Co., Ga. in Oct. 1874 to Lucinda Shaver (6/11/1858 Va.-5/29/1938). They were residents of Hamilton Co., TN by the 1880 census. Both are buried in Altus, Arkansas. His name appears on a Coal Miner's Memorial erected in Altus along with the following Yothers: ADAM DAVID YOTHER, BEN YOTHER, BENNY YOTHER, BUEL L. YOTHER, CLAUD HAROLD YOTHER, DAVID YOTHER, DAVID LAWRENCE YOTHER, ELVIS RAY YOTHER, FRED LEE YOTHER, GEORGE EDGAR YOTHER, HARRY YOTHER, HENRY "HARRY" YOTHER, QUINCY A. YOTHER, WILSON YOTHER. Photo from Joy Stone - <jtstone@earthlink.net>



GERALD YODER, of the NC Yoders, in one of his last photos. Taken as he was telling his family stories from his early memories.

#### \*\*\*\*\*Queries\*\*\*\*\*

The YNL will publish Yoder related inquiries or exchanges at no charge. Please limit as possible to include a full return address. All inquiries are checked against our records to see if we can help too. If you receive added info, please share it with the YNL for our files. Send Queries to: Chris Yoder, 203 Lakeshire Rd., Battle Creek, MI 49015 or email at [75757.3371@compuserve.com](mailto:75757.3371@compuserve.com).

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WHO WAS George William Yoder m. 12/20/1866 Warren Co., OH Hannah Jane Ceasar , had children: Mollie Yoter d. 6/4/1872 age 1y 2m whooping cough\Franklin Twp, Warren Co, OH, and James G. Yoter d. 5/31/1882 age 5y5m7d. REPLY TO: Chris Yoder, 203 Lakeshire Rd., Battle Creek, MI 49015.

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WHO WAS: Newton YOTER, Farmer, of Cumberland Co., Pa, at 25 at time of marriage Dec. 4, 1885 to Alice SPANGLER, then age 21. They resided in Cumberland Co., after their marriage. REPLY TO: Chris Yoder, 203 Lakeshire Rd., Battle Creek, MI 49015

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**Herald of Truth-Volume XXI, Number 3 - February 1, 1884**  
Yoder - On Dec. 12th near Sharon Center, Johnson Co., Iowa, of cancer. Bishop Abner Yoder, aged 69 years, 8 months, and 14 days. He was sorely afflicted, yet he endured his suffering with Christian resignation. Buried on the 13th, when a large concourse of sympathizing neighbors and friends were present. Funeral services were conducted by C. Miller and F. Swartzendruber. For More "Mennobits" see:  
<http://freepages.gencalogy.rootsweb.com/~mennobit/>

**YODER PASSINGS:**

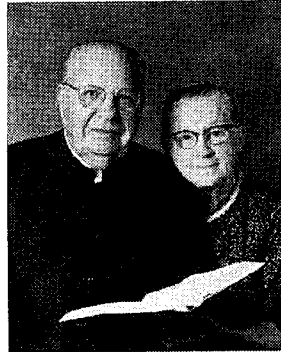
Wilfred K Yoder, (YR233746d1) born in Tofield, Alberta, Canada, on July 19, 1930, to Vernon L. and Phoebe (Roth) Yoder, Died July 19, Friend, Neb.

Eloise R. Nichols d. May 14, 2003 b. Morrisvale, WV int. Oak Hill, Wv. (g-daughter of Con3925 Thomas Alexander Yoder (4/19/1877 NC-1962 Tornado, Kan. Co., WV) m. Delia Butcher (2-/1882 WV-1939)

Philip Yoder, Salem, OR, Feb 20, 2002, son of Walter Yoder and Mona R. Yoder (YR12a337411)

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**J. Otis Yoder  
Passes On**



J. Otis Yoder, 88, world-citizen, departed from this world to the heavenly world from his personal care home in Mattawana, PA, Friday, July 18, 2003. Dr. Yoder, the youngest of seven children, was dedicated to the Lord in childhood by his parents, Levi and Mary Hershberger Yoder, in their homestead cottage in Colorado. He grew up in the Mennonite Church community at Midland,

Mich., where he was ordained to the ministry 65 years ago this month and served in leadership roles in the church in several states.

After his ordination he pursued Bible training, earning a doctorate in theology and N.T. language. He was on the faculty at Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary for 21 years. During his entire lifetime, he faithfully taught and preached the word of God in many churches and schools across the nation and in foreign lands.

He heard the voice of the Lord calling him to be a "voice." In response he founded "Heralds of Hope Inc." to proclaim the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. This HOPE ministry in 35 years reaches around the world and is translated into six major languages. More than 200,000 Bibles and millions of pieces of literature have taken the message of HOPE into every part of the world.

He was married to Isabelle King on June 23, 1939, in West Liberty, Ohio. They have two children: John O. Yoder and wife Arlene; Constance Heatwole; five grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren, all who survive along with a sister, Mrs. Elsa Arbogast, and husband of Harrisonburg, Va.

His HOPE ministry is now carried on by a nephew, J. Mark Horst, and a dedicated board and staff. In his memory, contributions may be sent to Heralds of Hope Inc., PO Box 3, Breezewood, PA 15533. <http://www.heraldssofhope.org/>

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**Hatten S. Yoder Jr.** -Hatten S. Yoder Jr., the emeritus director of the Carnegie Institution's Geophysical Laboratory whose research about the effects of high pressure and temperature on minerals contributed to knowledge about the origins of life, died Aug. 2, 2003 at Suburban Hospital in Bethesda, Md. He was 82 and had sepsis, a bleeding disorder and renal failure.

Yoder served on a number of national scientific advisory boards. His publications included the book "Generation of Basaltic Magma" (1976) and more than 100 articles in scientific journals. He was editor of the book "The Evolution of the Igneous Rocks: Fiftieth Anniversary Perspectives" (1979).

In 1945, he worked with a team of Russian and U.S. meteorologists in Siberia to establish a weather monitoring station before the planned Allied invasion of Japan. He described that experience in his book "Planned Invasion of Japan, 1945: The Siberian Weather Advantage" (1997).

Yoder, who lived in Bethesda, was a native of Cleveland and a graduate of the University of Chicago. Yoder served in the Navy as a meteorologist in the Pacific and Europe during World War II. He became an experimental petrologist at Carnegie in 1948 and was named director in 1971. His research continued after he retired as director in 1986.

His wife of 42 years, Elizabeth Marie Yoder, died in 2001, and his son, Hatten S. Yoder III, died in 1998. Survivors include his daughter, Karen Wallace of Gaithersburg, Md.; and a granddaughter. -The Washington Post

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Helen Wilson Yoder, Wilsonville, OR, May 4, 1909-Sept 30, 2002, wife of Nolan R. Yoder (dec.) (Nolan was g-son of Jonathan Samuel Yoder, pictured in this issue) (YR12a331). (YR12a331441)

Susan Yoder Corey of Lake Oswego, OR, May 23, 1948-Dec. 11, 2002, daughter of Nolan and Helen Yoder. (YR12a3314414)

Lydia Gregg Yoder, Canby, OR, (March 1916-April 11, 2003) wife of Glenn E. Yoder, dec., (YR12a33114)

Glenda Yoder Sano, of Canby, OR, Jan 25, 1945-March 13, 2003, daughter of Glenn E. and Lydia Yoder (YR12a331141)

Harold E. Yoder, 89, s/o OH1334216 Dr. Elmer Franklin Yoder, Lancaster Co, Pa.

John W Yoder, 80, s/o John H. and Kathryn West Yoder, born Glenmoore, Pa., res. New Holland, Pa.

Carrie Lynn Yoder, 26, Mar. 2003, desc. of Seneca Yoder (OY434a)

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**YODERS OF NORTH CAROLINA  
LOSE TWO STALWARTS**

**GERALD M. YODER--HICKORY** - Gerald Murray Yoder, 86, of Zion Church Road, Hickory, North Carolina, died Tuesday, Aug. 26, 2003, at his residence after a period of declining health. Born Feb. 13, 1917, in Catawba County, he was a son of the late Edgar Theodore and Mary Epsy Whitener Yoder. A member of New Jerusalem Lutheran Church, he was a life member of Lutheran Men and served on the church council. He was a veteran of the United States Marine Corps. He worked as a rural letter carrier with the U.S. Postal Service and was a livestock dealer and farmer. A member of the Rural Letter Carriers Association, he served as treasurer of the Yoder Family in the North Carolina reunion association for 20 years and often told stories about events in his community during the first half of the 20th century to the family group. He spoke at both national Yoder Reunions held in North Carolina in 1995 and 2000, and was a benefactor of the Yoder House in Grantsville, Maryland. He was a descendant of Catawba County pioneers Henry Whitener, Michael Whitener, George Wilfong and Conrad Yoder. --Hickory Daily Record, Wednesday, August 27, 2003

(NOTE: Gerald was active in The Yoder Family of North Carolina and served 53 years in support of the organization. He and his son, past YNC President Ted Yoder, had continued to play a main role in upkeep and maintenance of the Conrad Yoder cemetery)

**HELEN ELIZABETH YODER HAHN**, mother of past Yoders of NC President Rachael Hahn Kennedy, passed in her sleep at Rachael's home on Friday, April 4, 2003. Helen Yoder Hahn, 85, was born in Catawba County on July 9, 1917, to the late Hettie Dietz Yoder and the late Michael Enloe Yoder. She was a retired teacher with the Broward County School System of Florida and the Burke County School System of North Carolina. Mrs. Hahn belonged to the Delta Kappa Gamma Sorority and Alpha Psi Omega Fraternal Organization. She graduated from Lenoir Rhyne College in 1937. She was married to the late Rev. Lester Clement Hahn, Sr. -- (The Charlotte (NC) Observer, April 5, 2003)



Helen Yoder Hahn(8) and Fred Roy Yoder(6) reading dates of birth in Conrad Yoder Bible.

PHOTO FROM "YODERS OF NC" by Dr. Fred Roy Yoder

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