



30 YEARS TRACKING THE MELCHIOR YODER FAMILY GRACIE AND DONALD HONEYWELL



Long-time “Melchior Yoder Line Coordinator” Donald Honeywell, whose grandmother Ida Laura Yoders (M2384) was descended from Melchior’s son Jacob Yoders (with an “s”), began his genealogy journey in 1994, and he readily admits he came to genealogy late.

His maternal grandfather, George Cephas Gilbert, died in 1956. The Joseph C. Yoders family Bible was in his possession and somehow, it came to Don. He says that it was rediscovering this family Bible that sparked his YODERS interest.

Don quickly connected with other long-time researchers of the Melchior Yoder family, such as Carl Miller Yoders of Yardville, New Jersey, and Dorothy Yoder Coffman (see her YNL3 article on Melchior) as well as Chris Yoder of the Yoder Newsletter, and started to develop a data base of information about Melchior and his children and the descendants of each. He and his wife Gracie worked on these files very actively and continued for almost 30 years, becoming the YNL official “Melchior Yoder Line Coordinator”. He learned by talking to others, asking questions, but most importantly visiting the places where Melchior’s family lived. Initially he was living in Baltimore County, Maryland, so a trip to Pennsylvania was something that could be done fairly easily.

The notes he and Gracie placed into a Family Tree Maker database include typed copies of emails he received from hundreds of individuals, both requesting information and offering information about their families. He constantly researched information on where individuals lived to better understand their

TRACKING MELCHIOR- CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

THE AMISH YODERS WHO STAYED IN BERKS COUNTY

by Ann Balderrama, Reading, PA



Widow Barbara Yoder (w/o YR1) Bible handed down
Shown with the late YR17a5413 Benjamin K Yoder, Mohrsville, PA

A few years ago now, as I researched my unlinked Yoder line, I encountered many Yoders of the YR17 line in the same geographical area as my family. As we really had no idea of our Frederick’s origin (unlinked B line), I decided to take a closer look at the YR17 line. Was it possible that Frederick may have belonged to this line? As I looked closer at this line it became clear that this was not Frederick’s family, but I was able to gather a lot of information from credible sources to verify, supplement and correct the information in the YNL database for this line. Because I am based in Berks County, I only looked for the family groups that stayed in Berks County and environs, so there are large gaps in this update, for example: David “Long David” Yoder, YR174, was known to be in Mifflin County by 1804. Further information on him would be difficult for me to find, so I didn’t follow the line of his family.

Much of the information in the YNL database is reasonably correct. The numbering system used for the Amish lines, I noticed, is that used in the massive work *Amish and Mennonite Genealogies* by Hugh Gingrich and Rachel Kreider. The original compilers of this information did an exceptional job, but as with anything done by humans, there are some errors. Some children are placed with the wrong parents, some children are missing from the database; with the way everybody used the same half-dozen or so names, that kind of mistake is perfectly understandable. I have done my best to document my sources, although I may not list

AMISH YODERS IN BERKS CO- CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The Yoder Newsletter- Founded 1983 by Ben F Yoder (1913-1992),
Chris Yoder & Rachel Kreider (1909-2015).

Chris Yoder, Editor, Saugatuck, MI; Kenneth W. Yoder, Circulation and Mail Manager, Goshen, IN; Paul Yoder, Asst Cir/Mail Mgr, Other Contributors: Richard H. Yoder, Bechtelsville, PA; Neal D. Wilfong, Cleveland, NC; and Ann Balderrama, Reading, PA. And our other Goshen area volunteer team members: Titus King, and Cheryl Parsons, and our Webmaster team of: Leon Yoder and Chad Yoder of Black Anvil Media, Inc., Shipshewana, IN.

Over the past 41 years, subscriptions have allowed us to support advertising of national reunions, to provide funding for many of the DNA tests, and to pay for new research into Swiss records. All of our staff members are volunteers.

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, 551 S. Maple St., Saugatuck, MI 49453 or email at cyoder@tds.net

YNL PRICE INFORMATION

-Annual YNL subscription (published Apr. and Oct.) for \$5.

-BACK ISSUES of the YNL are \$3 per issue. (or you can download them free - 1 to 2 years after publication from the Yoder newsletter web site: www.yodernewsletter.org)

YODER DATA (now on an 8GB USB stick) - Slowly keeping up with technology! Includes back issues of YNL text, census and county records, family group data and pictures and scanned images. The price for our "Yoder Data on USB" is \$15 (postage included). Send to YNL address in Goshen. (Most of this info is also available free at the YNL Homepage and changes hardly at all.)

YNL Consolidated Volumes A Perfect Christmas Gift!

We have just published the 3rd consolidated volume of Yoder Newsletters 51 to 75 (with an every name index) and it is available thru Amazon Books in BOTH a Color and a Black and White version. Also available are Volume 1 (Issues 1-25) and Volume 2 (Issues 26-50) in soft cover volumes (B&W only). To order any of these, go to Amazon books and search for "Yoder Newsletter".



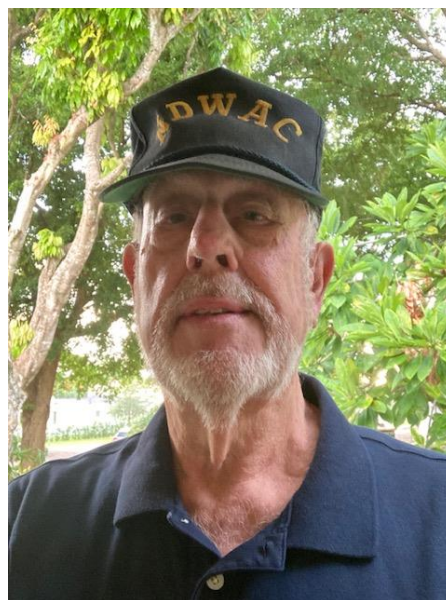
YR12a3218- Blaine Eli Yoder (5/20/1889 Morrill, KS-10/ /1968, Steele Cem., Falls City, NE. State Purchasing Agent

UPDATED FIND-A- GRAVE COUNTS

Visit the Find A Grave site at: www.findagrave.com . As of 6 Aug 2023 the counts for interments were: 22,763 records (an increase of +373 from 6 Feb 2023) for -Yoder; 550 (+3) - Yother; 372 (+13) - Yothers; 307 (+1) - Yotter; 74 (+1) - Yoter; 311 (+0) - Yoders; 85 (+2) - Ioder; 123 (+15) - Joder; 60 (+2) - Jotter; 1 (+0) - Joders; 9 (-2) - Youder; 3 (+0) - Youders; 19 (+0) - Youther; 8 (+0) - Youthers; 7 (+0) - Younder.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

Editor's comment- Celebrating the 40th birthday of the newsletter, makes it particularly appropriate to again thank our dedicated readers. Of our first 100 subscribers 40 years ago, 16 are still with us (not counting those who may have lapsed and then resubscribed). Subscriber number 91, L. Douglas Yoder, has one of the earliest continually active subscription, so we invited him to send in his "story". So glad that he said "yes"!



Chris, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on my Yoderness experience, enhanced, as it has been, by the Newsletter. I offer the following:

I am one of the Oregon Yoders, who homesteaded land in the Willamette Valley in the late 1880's by way of Springfield, Illinois and Carthage, Missouri. They brought a sawmill, they were farmers and teachers and shopkeepers. They created the community of Yoder,

east of Portland near Canby. The Yoder Sawmill and the Yoder General Store are both still operating, so far as I know. My grandfather, Levi David (whose initials I carry), is at rest in the graveyard of the Smyrna Church, where every August the Yoder clan gathers for a potluck and ice cream social, as they have during my entire life. My Dad, Joseph Benjamin Yoder, may have been the first of the group to attend college, graduating as a mechanical engineer from Oregon State in 1911. He extended the Yoder frontier to Washington state in 1922 when he took a job at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton west of Seattle. In the pioneering Yoder tradition, he bought 80 acres of land on Puget Sound, lived in a tent while building a cabin, and lived in the cabin which became the living room of the house that he built around it. That was the house in which I grew up. He cleared 40 acres and planted a holly farm, selling Christmas holly across the country, all the while still working at the Shipyard.

My "Yoderness" came, of course, from my Dad's stories about the family and our regular visits to Oregon, where I met more of the family. We also visited my uncle Grant Yoder who had extended the frontier to Alberta and British Columbia with his family.

My brother, Ronald J Yoder (1944-1997), moved the Oregon Yoder frontier to Texas, where his family lives in the greater Houston and Dallas areas, plus a daughter in Colorado. I came to Florida 52 years ago, so now there is a beachhead in south Florida where my son and granddaughter also live. So Yoderness, in my experience, includes a certain wanderlust, perhaps exemplified by St Joder's pilgrimage bringing Christianity to Switzerland in the 3rd Century (any Yoder traveling there should see the St Joder Chapel and seek out St Joder wine documented in the Newsletter) and the widow Barbara's Atlantic crossing in 1742. Other characteristics include perseverance, mutual assistance, building communities, civic engagement, good humor, and common sense....arguably a solid set of traditions for today's troubled world. L Douglas Yoder- Coral Gables, FL (s/o YR12a3339)

AMISH YODERS OF BERKS CO- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
all of them here in the interest of saving space. If you would like to have the full documentation, contact me.

I have continued to use the numbering system already in place, but made changes when I found children not already in the database, or when they were out of order. For this article, I will focus primarily on John YR17 and his sons John YR177 and Jacob YR17a, the ones that stayed in Berks County.

One point I would like to make is that, in some cases, where there is no conclusive evidence for some relationships, I try to arrive at a logical conclusion. When I do this without citing evidence, please remember it is my conjecture, my guess. If I have conclusive proof, I will present it. If the conclusion is speculation, I will state it as such. Please do not take these speculations of mine and add them to your family tree as "facts." I may have gotten it wrong!!

The mother of this line of Amish Yoders in America is Widow Barbara. Her husband reportedly "died at sea" and his name remains unknown. There is some speculation as to his identity, but family trees on Ancestry.com with no documentation do not constitute proof. Widow Barbara and her children arrived in America in 1742 on the ship "Francis and Elizabeth" along with brother-in-law Christian Jotter and his family (YR2) at Philadelphia and moved up the Schuylkill River valley to a frontier region of Lancaster County in the shadow of the Blue Mountains. Ten years later the region would become part of the newly formed Berks County. The homestead, originally in Bern Township, is now in Tilden Township. Barbara's seventh child John YR17 married Anna Burkey; they had ten children that have been identified, seven girls and three boys. Two of their sons, John YR177 and Jacob YR17a, stayed in Berks County; some of their descendants are still members of the Mohrsville Church of the Brethren, the same church attended by John and Jacob. It is the progeny of these two that I have focused on.

Widow Barbara and Her Children- I tried to verify everything in the database regarding the first generation to arrive in the New World but met with only moderate success. I was unable to find anything on Widow Barbara. I don't know when she died or where she is buried. I can't even find a hint of a death date for her. There is no will or estate file for her in Berks County. The family settled in what was Lancaster County, but there are no wills in Lancaster County for Yoder or Joder until 1863. Barbara simply vanished.

The sons are fairly well documented, but not so much the daughters. Catherine YR11 married to Isaac Kauffman and Magdalena YR13 supposedly married to Christian Fisher, then to John Miller, have no estate files in Berks County, nor do their husbands. Either they had no estates, or they died somewhere besides Berks County. Barbara YR18 married to John Shirk has a will in Lancaster County (see YNL #2).

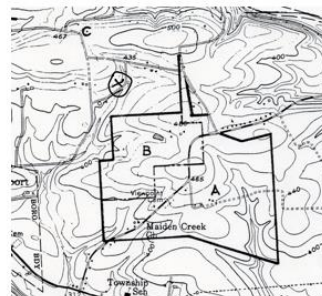
The Find a Grave listing for Anna Elizabeth Yoder YR15 says she was born in Berks County in 1728. This is wrong on two counts. First, Berks County did not exist until 1752, and second, her mother only arrived here in 1742 when Anna was already about 14 years old. She married Samuel Koenig and died in Berks in 1788. Her husband was born 1 January 1724 in Bern, Switzerland and died in Cumru Township, Berks County on 16 January 1777. They are both buried at Koenig Cemetery, Rickenbach, Berks County. Finding this bit was a surprise for me. When I located the cemetery on Google Maps, I discovered that I had been by that location many times, but I never knew the few houses at that intersection was known as Rickenbach. There are two small family cemeteries in that general area, Koenig and Rickenbach, both the final resting place for some of the Yoder women.

Veronica YR19 married John Hertzler. Her Find a Grave memorial says she was born in Switzerland in 1736, died in Belleville, Mifflin County, PA in January 1806. It includes the oft told tale of her father John Jacob Yoder who died at sea on the ship

"Francis and Elizabeth" during his passage to America with his wife Barbara Rupp Yoder. As is usual with this story, no sources were cited. (There was a Jacob Yoder married to Barbara Rupp, but they are documented as AL in the unlinked section of the database; they were also a generation younger. Their daughter Veronica was born in 1795, died in 1867 and never married. This family was definitely not Widow Barbara and her husband.) According to the Hertzler/Hartzler family history that has clippings posted on Find a Grave, Veronica and her family lived in many different places in Berks County. Her husband died in Womelsdorf in western Berks in 1801; Veronica died five years later and many miles away in Mifflin County where at least three of her sons were living. At least one of her daughters remained in Berks County.

Veronica's daughter Barbara Hertzler was born 3 September 1759 in Alsace Manor, Berks County and died 23 March 1838 in Bern Township. Barbara Hertzler married Jacob Rickenbach (9 September 1757 – 15 January 1831), and both are buried in Rickenbach Cemetery. They were the parents of a daughter Veronica Rickenbach who married John Yoder YR177, her first cousin once removed (her mother's first cousin and her grandmother's nephew). Also, Jacob and Barbara's younger daughter Anna married Jacob Yoder YR17a, so two of their daughters married brothers.

John Yoder YR17- John arrived in America with his mother and siblings in 1742. John Yoder YR17 was born about 1732 and married Anna Burkey; they resided in Bern Township. John made several purchases of land in Bern Township, the first a plot of 50 acres made on 19 May 1755 from Adam Sweigart for five pounds ten shillings. He bought a tract from Christian Stutzman on 10 June 1756, one hundred acres for eighty pounds. These purchases may have been made prior to his marriage. I have not located the land on the map, so I don't know exactly where the parcels were located or if they were contiguous. He then sold both parcels to Joseph Sullaberger on 25 October 1763 for 240 pounds. According to the information I have, John's first child Barbara was born in June 1763, so he sold his lands just as he was starting his family. About two years after his tenth child was born, John became an official landowner again. He received patents for two tracts of land in Bern Township on 12 January 1785. The first tract of 255 ¼ acres was a made up of two tracts, one of 178 acres and 138 perches warranted to John on 24 November 1784 and another contiguous tract of 76 acres and 140 perches warranted to John Horn/Horse on 24 August 1750. The second tract of 87 ¾ acres was warranted to Isaac Melin Jr. on 1 January 1735, for a total of 343 acres. Whenever John bought or sold land he was described as a resident of Bern Township. It is most likely that he raised his family on the land that he eventually patented.



A and B are the two tracts patented to John in 1785 that total 255 acres. The cemetery is at the circled X. Perhaps this was part of the 87-acre parcel also patented in 1785.

Most of John's children moved on from Berks County. Barbara YR171 married Jacob Gnaegi and died before her father. According to the information in YNL, she resided in Lebanon County and died in 1798. Here is another historical inaccuracy. A portion of Lancaster County became Dauphin County in 1785; the eastern portion of Dauphin County became Lebanon County in 1813, fifteen years after Barbara's death. Veronica YR172 appears

AMISH YODERS OF BERKS CO- CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

TRACKING MELCHIOR- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

family life and circumstances. He found obituaries both on Find A Grave and online that he included in his notes. Gracie was an important part of the research. She edited the typed files and that information was always sourced as to where she found the changes which needed to be made. Working together, often 8 hours a day, they created the first comprehensive research about the children of Melchior Yoder. Don writes about their efforts *"Discovering my YODERS ancestors back to Melchior was quite satisfying. What challenged us the most was discovering a lady's maiden surname. This is where Gracie's discovery talents and tenacity shined forth."*

As early as 2005, Don contributed his comprehensive research files to the Yoder Newsletter web site (www.yodernewsletter.org). He updated that on-line information in 2008 and then again in 2011. In their years of effort, they created a database of over 36,000 names associated with the sons and daughters of Melchior, and also identified a handful of likely individuals whose connection is felt "likely, but unproven".



Don at the 2006 National Reunion- Grantsville, MD

The Honeywells have been active participants in both the House of Yoder, and the various Yoder National reunions. He believes he and Gracie may have attended 3 or 4 of the House of Yoder annual meetings at Penn Alps. Don writes that they went for the first time *"our attendance having been with the encouragement of Carl Miller Yoders who got us interested. It was before the barn beams washed down the river. I think we were there for the ground breaking. We remember a big muddy hole filled with water. My rememberer isn't in the best of condition at my age (91). But I especially remember 2002 when the group took a bus trip to Shanksville, PA."*

They attended several of the National Yoder Reunions in Pennsylvania plus a couple of the ones sponsored by the Yoders of North Carolina. At the 2012 Reunion in Hickory, NC he set up a display table to share his accumulated records.



Don Honeywell at the 2012 NC Yoder Reunion



Don's Display table With Melchior Data

Don writes: *"Gracie never intended to do any genealogical research at all - ever. She was hooked like a large-mouthed bass when she found her great -- grandfather in the E.A.Q.G. records at a first recorded Quaker meeting in around 1650 in Nansemond County, VA... However, Yoders were not her interest until I kept turning over problems that I could not solve. She is like a bulldog after a bone! Many, many blanks have been filled in. She gave up doing her own research for more than 4 years and focused on the update which we were able to give Emily. I have only been playing catch-up with all her research."*

For each M# dedicated to someone in the genealogy, a file was then created that would provide paper back-up of census records, social security information and residence. Don didn't hesitate to use maps and atlases to try to find the location of the land where individuals lived. Don was a member of the Greene County Historical Society since many of Jacob (M2) children lived in that area. Over the years they have been members of several other historical and genealogical societies including: Maryland Historical Society; Maryland Genealogical Society; Baltimore County (MD) Genealogical Society; Cornerstone Genealogical Society (Waynesburg, PA); Southwest Pennsylvania Genealogical Society (Washington, PA, now defunct), etc. Cornerstone was a great help. They also performed research at the DAR Headquarters, Washington, DC; Presbyterian Historical Society; and court houses in Waynesburg, PA and Washington, PA; and visited a number of cemeteries in various locations.

After 30 years of effort, he laughingly recalls a conversation with his sister many years ago: *"Another anecdote. I asked my sister, Alice, 'Would you like to see what I have done so far with our Yoders genealogy?' She responded, 'Not now; I will look at it when you are finished.'"*

Emily Coffman Richardson Assumes the Mantle:

After moving to Alabama in 2012, travel became less frequent, but internet resources continued to improve. Still, as he reached his 90s, he began to think about handing off their work to someone with more energy. He suggested Dorothy Coffman's daughter Emily Richardson, who he had already been in touch with for family research and she, having retired from a career as a college administrator and begun life as a professional genealogist, quickly accepted. It gave her an opportunity to carry on the Yoder family research work her mother had loved.

One of Don's efforts was to reach out by mail to those that had written to the Yoder Newsletter, or to him directly when he was preparing updates, asking for them to compare the information with what they knew about the specific family line.

Emily recalls *"It was one of these letters he sent to my father in 2004, after my mother's death, that initiated our first contact. I had just started to move through Mom's boxes of information, but remembered seeing correspondence from a Don Honeywell to my mother. I responded, and little did I realize that he would offer*

me the ability to also absorb his research into my genealogical library."

She continues: "Meeting Don and Gracie was one of my highlights in 2022. Being offered the opportunity to continue to research the Melchior Yoder lines is no small task. Hopefully as we post the first round of updates, you will find them useful in your own personal research. For these updates, see www.yodernewsletter.org "Non-Amish Families" where the updated Melchior files should be fairly complete by the time of the Oct 2023 YNL, and likely all there by the end of the year.)

Emily's long-term goal is to create several volumes of information, one on each of the Melchior children (John, Jacob, Benjamin, J. Peter and Catherine; plus one on brothers Henry and Melchior), along with a separate volume just on Melchior and his family back in Germany and Switzerland.

She writes: "But I want the information to include pictures, documents, and other types of support for each of the families. I plan to email many of you and ask for this support as I begin working on that specific child's volume. As I reach out to some of you for updates, please note the new email and address that is attached (kinsearchers@gmail.com). Don't hesitate to contact me if you have Yoder family pictures, or information that you'd like to share for these volumes. I'm sure that Don and Gracie would still love to hear from you but know that I too will care for your information and offerings and share with others as we continue to learn more about the Melchior Yoder family."

AMISH YODERS IN BERKS- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

to have never married; her death date and burial place are unknown.

Anna YR173 married Christian Gerber. Her sister Magdalena YR176 married Abraham Gerber. The men may have been brothers, but I have not looked into that yet. Both couples migrated to Ohio, where they are buried in neighboring counties. Elizabeth YR175, as per her father's will, was married to Stephen Kurtz, but I can find nothing more on either of them. David YR174 was already settled in Mifflin County by the time John wrote his will in 1804. Sarah YR178, her husband Daniel Kauffman, sister Catharine YR179 and her husband John Hertzler all moved to Mifflin County, as well. The marriage of Catherine (YR179) and John Hertzler is recorded in the register of Schwarzwald Church on 28 July 1805. That leaves John YR177 and Jacob YR17a. These two remained in Berks County, with few, if any Amish left in the area.

John disposed of his land before his death. On 24 August 1804, John deeded the two tracts totaling 343 acres that he acquired in 1785 to his sons John Yoder Junior and Jacob (YR177 and YR17a, respectively). He specified that they were to own the land "as tenants in common and not as joint tenants." Tenants in common own equals shares of the land, and each tenant is free to sell his share or leave it in his will. Joint tenants have a right of survivorship: if one tenant dies, the property passes to the surviving tenant. It seems John wanted to make sure that each of his two sons could leave their portion to their heirs. While this seems like a loving act of a father toward his sons, he didn't give them the land. John Jr and Jacob paid a total of £1000 for the land. This was not unusual at that time; many men left their farms to a son, but the son then had to pay a certain amount of money to his siblings, to sort of even out the legacy.

John's other legal act of 24 August 1804 was to write his will. Ten children are named: David, John, Jacob, Freny, single, Anna, wife of Christian Gerber, Magdalena, wife of Abraham Gerber, Elizabeth, wife of Stephen Kurtz, Sarah, wife of Daniel Kauffman, Catharine, single and the children of his late daughter Barbara, wife of Jacob Knegi. He left his son David the land in Mifflin County that he currently possessed; David was directed to pay the estate £200. John and Jacob were to have the land they were just

deeded; they had to pay the estate £1000 (as was also stated in the deed). With the £1200, the executors were to pay the six daughters in equal shares plus one share to the children of "my defunct daughter Barbara." The widow Anna received a life estate; John directs his sons John and Jacob as to exactly what they must do for her. The will specifies how much grain to give the widow, and to take it to the mill and bring back the flour, how many milk cows she gets and that the sons must take care of them for her, that she be allowed access to the orchard and all the fruit she desires, etc. I have found this type of wording in other wills, and I wonder, were these children unlikely to take care of Mom on their own? Or was Dad leaving nothing to chance? George Yoder OH132 has similar language in his will.

At the time of Anna's decease, the executors were to divide the remainder of the estate between the three sons and six daughters with one tenth divided among Barbara's children. The executors were John Yoder, son, and Stephen Kurtz, son-in-law. There are no documents in the estate file relating to the disposition of the assets upon Anna's death. It is not known when she died.

Many who have previously written about John state that he died in 1804. I, most emphatically, say no, he did not. He wrote his will in 1804. According to the documents on file at the Berks County Register of Wills Office, letters testamentary were granted to John Yoder and Stephen Kurtz on 7 November 1807. On the same day the estate inventory was exhibited to the court. Wills were generally taken to court within a few days after the death of the testator (although I found an exception to this rule [more on that later], I find it hard to believe the executors waited three years). The early estate files did not include an affidavit of death as was later required, but I feel it is safe to say that John died not too long before the will was probated. Some of the duties related to estate settlement were performed by Justices of the Peace which allowed for the legal work to get done without the day of travel to and from the county seat, so it is possible that the will was presented to the local Justice, and he set in motion the inventory, and when that was completed, the documents were taken to Reading, a distance of about 15 miles.

John and Anna have a listing on Find a Grave, but as with other members of this family, the information is poorly documented. The listing says John was born in 1732 and died in 1804; Anna was born in 1740 and died in 1807. Both are buried at the Yoder Burial Ground on Callowhill Road in Centre Township. The listing also gives their date of marriage as 1762. The citation for these "facts" is the book *Epitaphs – Handbook of Historic Family Graveyards, Berks County, Pennsylvania* by Jacqueline B. Nein, John Texter and Cynthia Jimenez. The entry in the book gives directions to the cemetery and a description of the burial ground. When the book was published in 1999, the authors stated the "family of Jacob Yoder buried here according to a descendant living in Mohrsville." No grave markers remained at that time. The cemetery was located by a descendant in October 1998. "Activity indicates 1 row of 9 abreast laying east to west." The book gives absolutely no names or dates of anyone suspected of being buried in this cemetery, so where did the person who posted on Find a Grave get that information? The cemetery is not on John's 255 acre tract; perhaps this is the location of the other 87-acre tract.

My question at this point is who is Jacob Yoder of this family cemetery? There were a few Jacobs in Berks County in the early days, but they all moved on except Jacob YR17a and we know he is buried at Viewpoint Cemetery. Is this a reference to Widow Barbara's husband? His name is reported to be Jacob; perhaps his name actually was passed down in the family.

John Yoder YR177 - John, referred to as John Junior in the deed from his father, was born in Berks County 22 December 1773. His marriage to Veronica (Frany) Rickenbach was recorded in the register of Schwarzwald Church on 20 July 1805 (8 days before that

AMISH YODERS IN BERKS- CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

of his sister Catherine). John and Veronica were first cousins once removed. They had eleven children.

The three sons, named as executors in his will, were Samuel YR1771, who moved to Mifflin County; Jacob YR1772 and John YR1773 stayed in Berks County.

John and his brother Jacob YR17a married the Rickenbach sisters. Daughter Judith YR1774 married Jacob König on 25 August 1832. She had five children, all of them under the age of 21 when the court appointed guardians for them on 2 January 1854. The appointment of guardians at this time was because of her father John's death in 1853 and her legacy from him that passed to her children. Judith's death date is unknown, but she had died before John wrote his will 16 April 1851. Lydia YR1775 was born 4 April 1816 and died 6 November 1894; she never married. Barbara YR1776 married William Klein on 24 October 1840. William was appointed guardian to Judith's children. Emanuel YR1777 stayed in Berks as did Mary YR1778. She was born 4 March 1821, married Johannes Becker, and died 18 February 1892, leaving her husband and four children. Benjamin YR1779 stayed in Berks County. John's daughter Caroline YR177a was born 20 March 1828 and died 27 March 1910. She married Isaac Braun/Brown of Bethel Township on 11 July 1857. As Caroline was kind enough to die at a time when a state death certificate was required, we have more information on her than on some of her other siblings. Her son, Adam Brown gave the information that her parents were John Yoder and Veronica Rickenbach. This seems to have been an uncertainty when the YNL database was built; she was placed as a possible daughter of John Yoder AL6 and his wife Catharine. The uncertainty was due to the fact that John Yoder AL6 lived in Bethel Township, as did Caroline and Isaac Brown after their marriage. The husband of Caroline under John YR177 was named as Isaac Brower. We now know that is not correct and Caroline married to Isaac Brown is indeed YR177a.

The youngest child of John and Veronica, Joseph was born 19 January 1830. He died 1 January 1857, just short of his 27th birthday, unmarried.

John inherited land in Center Township from his father, along with his brother Jacob as tenants in common. During his lifetime, John acquired additional land in Maidencreek Township that he mentions in his will. A parcel of about five acres was left to his daughter-in-law Eliza, as a home for John's grandchildren. The rest of his Maidencreek land, two parcels totaling about 83 acres, was sold by his executors after his death. How and when John came to purchase this land is not known; deeds for these parcels were not recorded. Likewise, if he enlarged his landholdings in Centre Township, he did not record the deeds.

John's will names eleven children: Samuel, Johannes, Emanuel, Benjamin, Joseph, Jacob (predeceased his father), Judith married to J. König, deceased, Lydia, Barbara married to William Klein, Maria married to John Becker, and Caroline. The will was written 16 April 1851 and proved 3 June 1853. He made provisions for his wife, giving her a life estate, one hundred dollars and the interest from an investment of \$1300 for her lifetime. She also received his ten shares of stock in the Mohrsville Bridge Company.

John, in his will, gave his son John YR1773 "one part of my plantation on which he is presently living, situated in Maidencreek Township." The will names several adjoining landowners "and the rest of my land, containing one hundred and twenty nine acre, and one hundred perches, according as it was surveyed on November 26, 1850." John, the son, was to pay the estate \$50 per acre. There is more talk of monies to be paid, but the photocopy of the will given to the translator was missing a line or two from the bottom of the page, so this information is incomplete.

Sons Emanuel YR1777 and Benjamin YR1779 received "my plantation on which I am presently living, situated in Centre Township, Berks County, joining on the land of: Jacob Joder,

Samuel Stepp, Jacob Heffner, Jacob Joder, and others, containing one hundred and ninety-two acres." The neighbors mentioned include two men named Jacob Yoder. I believe these were John's brother Jacob YR17a and Jacob's son, John's nephew, Jacob YR17a5. John's sons are further directed to pay \$40 per acre, with additional instructions to provide financially for Veronica.

John left a piece of land in Maidencreek Township to his daughter-in-law Elizabeth, widow of his deceased son Jacob YR1772, as a home for Jacob's children. John refers to this as a "strip of land" consisting of five and one quarter acres. She is to have this land "so long as she remains a Yoder." If she were to remarry or at her death, the land and house would pass to her children. To ensure that this would happen, John specified in his will "however the said house and strip of land shall be made out to the four children for five hundred dollars when my things are settled up after my death."

All of the land John bequeathed was given to three of his sons, John, Emanuel and Benjamin, and the children of his deceased son Jacob. Son Samuel YR1771, the firstborn, and the daughters were not given any of the land. The executors were directed to give valid deeds to the purchasers of the rest of the property not bequeathed. All of John's eleven children were named in the will: Samuel, Johannes, Emanuel, Benjamin, Joseph, Jacob (deceased), Judith (deceased), wife of J. König, Lydia, Barbara, wife of William Klein, Maria, wife of Johann Becker, and Carolina. They were all to receive an equal share of the money from the sale of the land, plus what the others were required to pay for the land. Samuel, Johannes and Emanuel were named as executors.

On 8 June 1853, Samuel appeared before a Justice of the Peace in Mifflin County to renounce his right to be an executor of his father's estate. Census records indicate that he had been in Mifflin County since at least 1840.

Veronica's death was announced in the Reading Adler, the German language newspaper, on 3 November 1874. It reported that she was the widow of the late John Yoder and daughter of "long-deceased Jacob Rickenbach." She died 17 October 1874 at the age of 90 years, 6 months and 19 days (21 days according to her tombstone).

John's children:

YR1771 Samuel Yoder (1806-1885). He married Sarah Kauffman, by 1840 they had moved to Mifflin County, PA. She died 17 August 1857, age 50-5-17. By 1860, three years after Sarah's death, Samuel had married Catherine King, widow of Nicholas Miller. Sometime after the 1880 census, Samuel moved to Ohio. He died in 1885 and is buried at Walnut Grove Cemetery, Alvordton, Williams County, Ohio. Samuel had seven children.

YR1772 Jacob Yoder (? – c 1848 Juniata County, PA) He married Elizabeth (often called Eliza) Phillips or Phillip (3 August 1817 Berks County – 8 January 1853 age 38-5-3). She is buried at Belleman's Church Cemetery. Jacob's burial place is unknown. Jacob had four children.

YR1773 John Yoder (? – 7 April 1890 age 80-11-27) John was a farmer, married to Sarah Bahr/Baer/Bear (15 April 1820 – 3 December 1898). John and Sarah lived in Maidencreek Township, Berks County, PA. They are buried at Viewpoint Cemetery. John had six children.

YR1774 Judith Yoder (? – died before 16 April 1851). She married Jacob König on 25 August 1832. While her death date is uncertain, it is known that she died before her father wrote his will on 16 April 1851.

YR1775 Lydia Yoder (4 April 1815 – 6 November 1894). She was not married. Lydia is buried at Ziegler's Church of the Brethren Cemetery, Rehrersburg, Berks County, PA.

YR1776 Barbara Yoder (about 1817 or 1818 – died after 1880). On 24 October 1840, she married William Klein (1814 – 11 March 1878). He is buried at Ziegler's Church of the Brethren Cemetery,

AMISH YODERS IN BERKS- CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

AMISH YODERS IN BERKS- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Rehrersburg, PA. Barbara's death date and burial place are not known.

YR1777 Emanuel Yoder (19 February 1819 – 18 February 1886). His wife, Sarah Koenig/ King (6 April 1830 – 24 November 1905). They were members of the Dunkard Brethren Church. Emanuel had seven children.

YR1778 Mary Yoder (4 March 1821 – 18 February 1892). Her husband, Johannes (John) Becker (19 May 1820 – 14 August 1900). They are buried together at Belleman's Church Cemetery.

YR1779 Benjamin Yoder (about 1827 – 5 October 1877). Lived in Centre Township, Berks County, PA. He was married to Sarah Saux/Sax/Saxe/Socks (7 December 1829 – 13 August 1869). Benjamin and Sarah are buried at Viewpoint Cemetery, the "Dunkard Cemetery," about one quarter mile from their home. Benjamin had seven children.

YR177a Caroline Yoder (20 March 1828 – 27 March 1910). She was married to Isaac Brown (1835 – 1901) on 11 July 1857. They are buried at Salem Reformed Church Cemetery, Bethel, Berks County, PA.

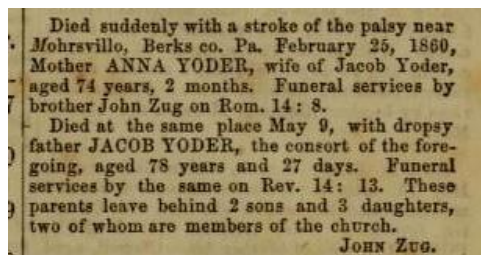
YR177b Joseph Yoder (19 January 1830 – 1 January 1857), buried at Ziegler's Meeting House, Bethel Township, Berks County, PA.

YR17a Jacob Yoder- Jacob Yoder was possibly born 13 April 1782. This is the date recorded in the Lancaster Pennsylvania US Mennonite Vital Records. The records consist of names and dates typed on a card. This date also appears on Jacob's Find a Grave memorial, but I have found no primary source to document this. If it is not the correct date of his birth, it's close. Jacob married Anna Rickenbach. She was born about 1785, and they both died in 1860.

Jacob was a farmer in Centre Township, Berks County, working on the land he inherited from his father. The 1850 census lists "Jacob Yotter," age 64, farmer, his wife Anna, age 61, son "Rheuben," 28, and daughter Anna (Nancy), 30, plus three other non-family members.

By a deed executed on 9 June 1853, Jacob and Anna sold a parcel of land, consisting of four perches, to the "School Directors of Common Schools of Centre Township district" for five dollars. One hundred sixty perches is equal to one acre, so it was a very small piece of land, just enough to put a small school on.

Jacob and Anna both died in 1860, before the census was taken, so they appear in the Federal Mortality Schedule, and their passing was noted in the Gospel Messenger, the publication of the Brethren Church. Anna died 25 February 1860 and Jacob died 9 May 1860. Jacob has a Find a Grave memorial; Anna does not. Jacob's memorial says he died in Mifflin County. Let me get back up on my soapbox again to discuss the issue of people who post their guesses as fact. Jacob lived all his life in Berks County, as far as I know, and none of his children moved to Mifflin County, so why would he go there to die? Without much effort, through the miracle of the Internet and ancestry.com, I was able to find that aforementioned mortality schedule. It clearly indicates that Anna and Jacob both resided in Centre Township at the time of their deaths.



Another issue with Jacob's Find a Grave memorial is that the person who posted it cited the Gospel Messenger, saying that Anna's death was reported as occurring in 1869. He noted the date discrepancy, but still let it go as fact. First off, how can anyone

publish an obituary nine years before the death? Below is a copy of that obituary which clearly says Anna died in 1860. Perhaps a bug got squashed on the copy that other guy had, making that 0 look like a 9. Anna and Jacob are buried in Viewpoint Cemetery.

Jacob and his brother John YR177 married the Rickenbach sisters. Jacob's children:

YR17a1 Elizabeth Yoder (16 December 1810 – 7 May 1893). She married Jonathan Koenig (13 December 1801 – 8 September 1874).

YR17a2 Anna Yoder (14 August 1812 – 8 January 1899). She was called Nancy. Single.

YR17a3 Abraham Yoder (12 November 1813 - ?).

YR17a4 Sarah Yoder (15 September 1815 – 8 April 1887). She married Daniel Christ (27 September 1810 – 29 April 1890). They are buried at St. Michael's Union Cemetery, Tilden Township, Berks County, PA.

YR17a5 Jacob R. Yoder (2 May 1818 – 26 September 1881). On 7 November 1846, he married Maria Koenig, anglicized to Mary King (10 March 1827 – 20 October 1906). He was a preacher in the Brethren Church. Jacob and Mary are buried in Viewpoint Cemetery. Jacob had seven children.

YR17a6 Reuben Yoder (27 July 1821 – 7 December 1899). Married first to Susanna Stepp (16 May 1827 – 13 September 1867). Married second on 24 September 1870 to Eleanora Hiester (28 August 1834 – 25 June 1910). Reuben was a member of the town council of Centreport at the time of his death. His farm was on a part of the land that John YR17 patented. Reuben, Susanna and Eleanora are buried at Viewpoint Cemetery. Reuben had eleven children, ten with Susanna and one with Eleanora.



Ann Balderrama is a Berks County, PA based genealogist who has been active in the Berks County Genealogical Society and the Oley Yoder Heritage Association. She was a key organizer of the 2014 National Yoder Reunion, hosted by the Oley Yoders and is a contributing editor to the Yoder Newsletter. Her previous articles have included several on her ancestor Frederick Yoder (unlinked code "B"), and one on Benjamin (1817-1899) who married Brigetta Hausman (unlinked code "AR", now believed to be a son of Jacob Yoder OY45). She may be reached at: alb1989@hotmail.com, use "Yoder" in the subject line so she doesn't think it's spam. Ann's full update on the lines of YR177 and YR17a can be found at <http://yodernewsletter.org/amish.html>



Sugarcreek, OH Am Legion Post 494 restores gravestone of Civil War vet Dr. Noah Webster Yoder (YR2333315) and adds a military marker. See YNL FACEBOOK for a full directory of pictures of the event. Great-great-granddaughter Vigillia (Gill) Barnett and her daughter, drove 1,000 miles from Oklahoma to attend the dedication ceremony held Jun 3, 2023.

(see Noah biography at YNL 54)

YODER PASSINGS:

-Melvin A. Yoder, 85, Kalona, IA, died Jan. 8, 2023. He was the son of Amos and Edna (Yoder) Yoder.

-Raymond S. Yoder, 89, Davidsville, PA died Jan. 7, 2023. He was the son of Edward and Ethel (Thomas) Yoder.



-Benjamin K. Yoder, 94, of Hamburg, PA (YR17a541313) died Sept. 15, 2019. He was the son of the late Edward S. (YR17a54131) and Mae J. (Kieffer) Yoder. He and his father took the Widow Barbara Yoder (w/o YR1) family bible to Kansas in 1947, for display at the big Yoder reunion held there near Yoder, Ks. The bible has also been displayed during the 2001 National Yoder reunion (YNL38) and many other family gatherings and remains in the family. His widow, Verna (Young)

Yoder, 94, formerly of Mohrsville, died Aug. 26, 2022 at Reading.

-Charles Christian "Chris" Yoder, 76, Baltimore, Md, died Mar. 17, 2023. He was the son of James G. (s/o YRB11424) and Ardia (Thomas) Yoder, and was the 48th person to subscribe to the Yoder Newsletter 40 years ago. His wife Carol writes "Thanks for all the pleasure your newsletter gave to Chris."

-Anna Guggisberg Joder, 87, of Steffisburg, Switzerland, beloved wife of Hans Jakob, died May 11, 2023 with her children all about her at a celebratory luncheon. Over many years, she, her husband Hans Jakob and their children Andreas, Barbara, Bettina, and Franziska, have welcomed many of their America Yoder cousins on their visits to Switzerland.



-Shawn B. Yoder, 53, of York Haven, PA died Jun. 5, 2023. He was the ggg grandson of Frederick Yoder (B line).



-Richard L. Yoder, 87, of Elkhart, formerly of Goshen, died Jun. 19, 2023. He was born in Silver Lake, IN to Jonas (YR1213724) and Dorothy (Metzger) Yoder. A dedicated volunteer member of the YNL envelop stuffing cadre starting in 2013 and he and his wife Marilyn helped out at the 2017 national Yoder reunion. He will be missed.

-David Yoder, 69, Coalgate, OK, died Jun 29, 2023. He was the son of Henry J (s/o YR1423444) and Elsie Elizabeth Yoder.

-David E. Yoder, 90, Pittsboro, NC, died Feb. 2, 2023. He was the son of Glen (s/o YR2365211) and Beulah (Yoder) (d/o YR2344339) Yoder.

-Edward Yoder, 91, of Kalona, IA died Mar 15, 2023. He was the son of Mose W (YR2344377) and Barbara (Bender) Yoder.

-Roger Lee Yoder, 81, Goshen, IN, died Jun 26, 2023. He was the son of C. Maynard (s/o YB137813) and Esther Yoder.

-Glenn R. Yoder Jr., 95, Davidsville, PA died Jul. 4, 2023. He was the son of Glenn R. Yoder Sr. (s/o YR2344919) and Ida (Stern) Yoder.

-Edward M Yoder, Kalona, IA, 91, died Mar 15, 2023. He was the son of Mose W (YR2344377) & Barbara (Bender) Yoder.



-Lowell Burnell Yoder, 93, Holland, OH died Jun 4, 2023. He was the son of Loran (s/o YA2429) and Vera (Schelling) Yoder. Lowell was founder and president of Yoder Machinery Company and a leader in many charitable activities, including giving the land and a building for a Christian radio station and the local Youth For Christ building as well as co-founding Friends of Haiti Organization (FOHO) through which he helped provide medical and other support on over 45 years worth of visits. See YNL19

and 40 for articles on some of his charitable activities, to include in 1992 converting a seven story former German water tower in Poland to be the first Christian radio station in Eastern Europe. Lowell and wife were Lifetime Subscribers to the Yoder Newsletter.

-Rev. Aden J. Yoder, 97, of Goshen, IN, died Apr. 4, 2023. He was the son of Jacob (YR26113343) and Lovina (Helmuth) Yoder.

-Gordon Ray Yoder, 97, of Goshen died Monday, Jan. 30, 2023. He was the son of Noah B. (s/o YB13716) and Florence (Hendricks) Yoder.

-Edwin A. Yoder, "Ed", 97, Audubon, NJ, died May 8, 2023. He was the son of Edwin Cleveland (YR2617246) and Leona McLean Yoder.

-Ivan Yoder, 94, Dover, Del., died Jan. 30, 2023. He was the son of Milton (YR26119242) and Oma (Yoder) (YR2611a2c) Yoder.

-James Everett "Jim" Yoder, 93, Hampton, VA, died Mar. 1, 2023. He was the son of Efird Johnson (s/o Con1138) and Mary Alice (Ramsey) Yoder.

-Charles Dean Yoder, 92, Elkhart, IN died Apr. 29, 2023. He was the son of Tobias T. (YR23374d9) and Katie L. (Stutzman) Yoder.

-George E. Yoder, 91, of Wooster, OH died Mar. 21, 2023. He was the son of Roy C. (s/o YRB11313) and Velma Ridenour Yoder.

-Louis S. Yoder, 90, Belleville, PA died Jan. 26, 2023. He was the son of John D. (s/o YR257917) and Annie M. (Spicher) Yoder.

-Esther Yoder, 90, South Hutchinson, KS died Jun. 27, 2023. She was the daughter of Jacob N. (s/o YR2354681) and Barbara Edna (Nisly) Yoder.

-Ronald E. Yoder (YR177128147), 82, McVeytown, PA died Oct. 2, 2022. He was the son of Lewis and Dorothy (Fagan) Yoder.

-Joe D. Yoder 96, Baltic, OH, died May 15, 2022. He was the son of Dan J. (YR2617475) and Sarah (Miller) Yoder.

-Hans Jakob Joder (see YNL73) 89, Steffisburg, Switzerland, died July 26, 2023, just a bit over two months after the loss of his wife Anna. The whole family of American Yoders joins in mourning the loss of our favorite European cousin. Expressions of sympathy can be sent by snail mail to: Barbara Urban-Joder, Schwandenbadstrasse 5, 3612 Steffisburg, Switzerland or email to son Andreas at: ajoder@bluewin.ch



COMING NEXT - APRIL 2024
A FULL ISSUE ABOUT THE 1947 YODER
REUNION HELD NEAR YODER, KANSAS
800 IN ATTENDANCE
