

# Schmucker • Smoker • Smucker



John Schmucker Homestead

Family Association Newsletter

Fall 2018

## President's Corner

By: Jim Smoker

**Family Gathering:** In this issue of the SSS Family Association Newsletter we highlight the beginnings of our 2021 SSS FA Family Gathering. Please refer to the article in this issue. We need volunteers in the Orrville-Smithville-Wooster area to assist in the planning and event coordination. Stacy Delsh will lead our efforts along with several members of the Board.

**E-mail Address Change:** I have a new e-mail address should you wish to contact me to share your thoughts, to share a family story, or a newsletter copy idea. Please reach out via [jsmoker25@comcast.net](mailto:jsmoker25@comcast.net). Speaking of e-mail addresses, of the 1700 SSS FA members, we only have the e-mails of about 90 members. To enable us to improve the speed of our communication and to possibly reduce our operating costs in the future. If you did not receive the e-mail sent out this Summer asking for your input regarding the 2021 SSS FA family Gathering, please share your contact information (name(s), address, and e-mail address with Jerry Smoker via: [jsmoker@msn.com](mailto:jsmoker@msn.com)

**Family Stories:** In our last issue Sue Kindt shared a family story, "It Is All About The Door". These family stories and legends are a part of the fabric of our families and need to be shared before they are lost to time. I wish I could remember all the stories my father and mother and grandparents shared. The hardships and successes they encountered on their life journeys. With the Holidays approaching I thought I'd add a recollection of childhood holidays with my paternal grandparents.

**Among our Own:** Alvin Smucker, PhD, retired distinguished professor from Michigan State University and member of our SSS FA Board, has developed a water conservation membrane that improves soil productivity and conserves water. This remarkable technology is being further developed and marketed in the USA and abroad. The technology is currently in use in six states in the USA and in sites in Zimbabwe, Kenya, China, Hungary, Australia, Canada, Mexico, and the Middle East. His article appears in this issue.

**Stoltzfus Family Book:** Those of us with SSS lineage traced to John (son of "Christian the Immigrant") and Barbara Stoltzfus should be aware that Nic Stoltzfus has completed the book, "German Lutherans to Pennsylvania Amish: The Stoltzfus Family Story". Researchers for this work included Elam Stoltzfus, Rose Beiler, and Zach Stoltzfus. Their research took them to several areas in Germany. Their work spans six generations from the years 1624 to 1832. The book can be ordered from Masthof Press by calling 610-286-0258 or by visiting their website at [www.masthof.com](http://www.masthof.com).

**Stacey Delsh Answers The Call:** We are pleased to announce that Stacey Delsh has responded to our request for candidates to serve as Secretary and Co-genealogist for the SSS FA. Stacy was confirmed by your Board during our September 25th Board conference call. Stacey will be heading up the 2021 SSS FA Family Gathering and volunteers are needed for a variety of responsibilities. Do contact Stacey via e-mail: [sdelsh@gmail.com](mailto:sdelsh@gmail.com) to volunteer and/or to share your thoughts on the upcoming Gathering.

In closing, I wish you a family-filled Holiday Season. Be well, Jim

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### Your SSS Family Association Officers, Board Members, and Volunteers

- ~ Jim (James M.) Smoker, President and Newsletter Editor
- ~ Eber Rice-Smucker, Vice President
- ~ Stacey Delsh, Secretary & Co-genealogy Database Coordinator
- ~ Darrell Smucker, Treasurer
- ~ Helen Ault, Board Member
- ~ Emily Smucker Beidler, Board Member
- ~ Alvin Smucker, Board Member
- ~ D. Richard Miller, Genealogy Database Administrator
- ~ Jerry Smoker, Registrar
- ~ Scott Stoltzfus, Website Coordinator
- ~ Jenna Seeley, Facebook Coordinator

## SSS Database Access

The SSS genealogic database is housed at the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS). Access to the database is limited to SSS FA members and the access information should not be shared outside our membership. Access the site via:

<https://www.lmhs.org>

On the opening page - Click on Genealogy

On the next opening page – Click on Databases

This brings up a list of databases – Click on “Schmucker-Smucker-Smoker Family Association Database”

Username: sssfa\_member (that’s sssfa underscore member”

Password: sssfa2017

The project of migrating and installing the database at LMHS cost the SSSFA \$8,000 and \$250 per year to maintain. The migration was necessitated to assure ongoing access to the genealogy database and to enable future development.

## SSS Data Binder Sponsorships

The SSS Family Association Board authorized the engagement of the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society (LMHS) in entering the genealogic data from 57 binders which contained family data of the Christian III descendants. This was a monumental project that SSS family volunteers (John R. Smucker, D. Richard Miller, John Rohrer, Marvin Frey, Kathryn Aschliman, S. Glenn Miller, Mary Lou Bowers, and Earl Nafziger). The cost was \$8,000 with much of the data entry performed by LMHS volunteers. There is an added cost of \$250 per year to maintain the database. We learned that there are additional binders which have been stored at LMHS since the 1970s. These data have not been entered into the database and we would like to undertake the entry of these genealogic data in the future. We are asking members to consider sponsoring each of the existing binders with a donation of \$100. The name of the donor and date of donation will be placed on a special label on the binder of your choice and maintained at LMHS into the future. Interested family members should contact Emily (Smucker) Beidler ([emilysbart@gmail.com](mailto:emilysbart@gmail.com)). The binder listing will be shared with you to enable you to select the binder you wish to sponsor. On behalf of the Board, thank you for your consideration.

To date, only two of the 57 binders have been sponsored. The SSS FA Board extends its thanks to:

Kathryn Aschliman and her brother who sponsored Binder #46 for grandfather Amos.

Emily Smucker Beidler who sponsored Binder #1 in honor of her father, John R. Smucker who was our former, long-standing SSS FA President, and Mennonite minister.

## 2018-2019 SSS Family Association 2018-2019 Donors

The SSS FA Board of Directors gratefully acknowledges the contributions of many family members since our last newsletter was published. Their contributions enables the ongoing work of the SSSFA. THANK YOU!

### 2018 Donors

D Edward & Nancy Burkard D  
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Jacqueline & Steven Steen  
Kathryn Aschliman  
Sandra Metz

### 2019 Donors

Cheryl A Parsons and son: Jesse Parsons  
Charlotte Lantz (Mrs. Edward) in memory of Edward Lantz  
Judy Smucker Chambers



Stacey Delsh (Christian - John - Christian III - Joel - Joseph - Calvin - Arlo - Donna - Dennis)

Stacey was born and raised in the Jackson, Michigan area. She obtained her bachelor’s in business management from Eastern Michigan University. Leveraging this degree, she has worked with companies within the Manufacturing and Telecommunication fields as part of the Human Resources team. Stacey married Ronald Delsh in 2008 in the US Virgin Islands. They love to travel and have had the opportunity to visit many exciting locations & cultures. Ron & Stacey recently expanded the family beyond their fur-baby, a Chihuahua named Beemer. Their son, Alexander, was born in 2019. They currently call Chelsea, Michigan home.

Stacey recently joined the SSS Family Association’s Board, serving as Secretary. She grew up learning various aspects of the Family Association through her Grandmother, taking a greater interest in Genealogy as time has progressed.



## Alvin Smucker Develops Soil Water Membrane Technology

Alvin Smucker,  
PhD and  
SSS Family Association  
Board Member

There remains a need for additional solutions to the world's food demands that build on our ancestors' practice of locally producing, processing, and storing nutritious grain and vegetable crops. A compendium of these former practices needs to be transferred to more than 300 million people globally, who are living on low production soils and dying at rates of 3 per second, due to lack of nutritious food.

We are also confronted by projections of nearly 10 billion people on Planet Earth during the next three decades. Yes, during these next 30 years, we need to produce 40% more local food, than used today, while requiring approximately 60% more water than the current 70% used by agriculture.

Today, while world agriculture is farming only 38% of all nonfrozen lands, at least 4.2 billion acres of sandy soils must be transformed into sustainable agriculture, while protecting the environment. The good news is a new soil water conservation and crop production improvement opportunity categorized as Soil Water Retention Technology (SWRT), has been field tested during the past 6 years to phenomenally increase agricultural production 22% to 504% for vegetables, fruits, grains, and cotton, while protecting the environment. The website: [www.swrtsolutions.com](http://www.swrtsolutions.com) provides additional details of this phenomenal SWRT.

Dr. Alvin Smucker, great grandson of Jonas and Sarah Smucker, grandson of Peter and Orpha Smucker, one of five sons of Paul and Ella Pearl Smucker, Smithville, Ohio, and a 47-year Distinguished Faculty Professor of Soil Biophysics at Michigan State University has developed commercial equipment for installing these engineered SWRT membranes below plant root zones to retain most rainfall and irrigation water, yet self-drain during excessive rainfall. SWRT membrane materials have been proven to be impermeable to water for well beyond 50 years. These new U-shaped SWRT membranes continuously provide optimal soil water, nutrients and oxygen in plant root zones of crops growing on rain-fed and irrigated sands. More details are available on website: <https://msutoday.msu.edu/news/2013/revolutionary-technology-aids-thirsty-crops-during-drought/>

This new SWRT has improved crop production and water conservation on more than 16 crops in four states and seven countries on four continents. SWRT Solutions, LLC is responding to requests by many governments, universities, industries, and local farmers interested in conserving water and expanding crop production on their small and large family farms.

## Memories of Smoker Family Holiday Gatherings

By: Jim Smoker

In keeping with our desire to capture stories of our SSS family heritage, I caught myself reflecting on the upcoming holidays. When I was young, my paternal grandparents, Joshua Stoltzfus Smoker and Hanna Beiler Smoker, would host an extended family gathering at Thanksgiving and Christmas at their home in Smoketown, Pennsylvania (near Bird-In-Hand). My grandfather was a younger sibling in his family and was a tenant farmer in Lancaster County. He and his children farmed several Lancaster physician-owned farms in the Lancaster County communities of Monterray and Ronks. Later in life he and Grandma Hanna moved to Smoketown and he finished his working life at the Glick's Plant Farm. They were "Weavertown Amish-Mennonite". I'm not certain when they left the "Old Order". His garden was always weed-free and immaculate (I wish I had his weeding patience!). I hope he isn't looking down and looking at mine during the late Spring and mid-Summer.

Thanksgiving was a wonderful time, Christmas, too. Typically, my Lancaster-based, uncles, and cousins joined in for a huge family dinner. There would aunts, uncles, cousins, and frequently a few church friends in attendance. We would usually exceed 20 around the table in the dining room for Thanksgiving. A typical Pennsylvania Dutch spread was served. Turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, gravy, homegrown peas, corn, red beets, home-canned pickles and homemade bread and pies...oh the pies! Cherry, mince meat, and shoe fly pies were passed at the end of the meal. We didn't pray at the beginning of the meal. Instead, we all sang, "Jesus Has the Table Spread". Some older family members and my Dad would sing this hymn in Pennsylvania Dutch. It took a few years, but I learned the words, too. I remember them to this day. After the meal, the older men folk would retire to the living room where they usually fell asleep. The women folk would clean off the table and start doing dishes together. It was an assembly line process and the many hands made light of the work. The "cousins" were so eager to see each other again and get outside. Usually we took a hike across the fields behind our grandparent's home to the stone railroad bridge and then over to the creek. The hike was filled with "catch up" stories each of us shared about school or fun things we had done since we last saw each other.

Christmas was a lot like Thanksgiving a huge family meal with lots of relatives to see and cousins to reconnect with. The difference was we youngsters always knew that Grandpa would hand out our Christmas presents. They were all the same each year. Each child received a brown paper bag. When we opened the bag, we knew what to expect. There would be an orange, several "Clear toy" candies in the shapes of trains or animals, and a layer of hard candy on the bottom of the bag. We also received a tea cup and saucer. Each was unique. We were never disappointed. I still have six of those teacups and saucers. They are another link to my past. Maybe I will later in life I will pass them on to my grandchildren. I asked my Dad, later in life, if this is what he received at Christmas. He affirmed that this was the tradition, but he might also receive a new shirt or a pair of pants, too. I tried this "Joshua Christmas Bag" gift on our six grandchildren one Christmas. I'm not certain they were too impressed even when I share the origin. Maybe I'll try it again now that they are older. Hmmmmmmm...

## **Mark Your Calendar for 7/22/2021-7/24/2021 !**

The SSS Board has selected the site for the 2021 SSS Family Gathering. Based on responses to SSS family members via an e-mail survey, (of those SSS e-mails we have on file) we are planning on holding "The Gathering" in Smithville, Ohio and be headquartered at the Smithville Mennonite Church from 7/22 to 7/24/ 2021. Stacey Delsh, recently Board-approved as our SSS FA Secretary and Co-Genealogist, will serve as the leader of the Family Gathering Workgroup.

The Smithville/Wayne County, Ohio area is a key SSS location and is close to Orrville and boasts many family-focused sites and activities that the Board is hoping will encourage younger SSS families to join us in 2021 and tie their Summer 2021 vacation plans to our Gathering. Please visit <https://www.wccvb.com> to learn of the variety of activities, hotels, and campgrounds available in the Wayne County region. Although the SSS Board has based its decision on the majority of respondents to our e-survey and Stacey has risen to the occasion to lead the workgroup to plan and make the gathering a reality, we are in need of team of individuals, preferably in the mid-Ohio region to take on the necessary roles to make the Gathering a success. The roles and number of folks needed to share in this endeavor include:

**Publicity** – 1 to 2 people to develop a publicity plan and to carry it out using local media, newspapers, Facebook, twitter, and the 2020 SSS Family Newsletter. Make and have printed the program and registration materials.

**Registration** - 1-2 people - work closely with publicity to communicate what needs to be on registration forms, collect registrations, money, and send e-mail acknowledgements, prepare folders/bags/ whatever we decide on and check people in at registration, make sure money is deposited

**Hospitality** - 1-2 people - find possible hotels and lodging information in the region and possibly get a reduced rate for SSS family members, line up caterer for meals, take care of hot drinks and snacks that are planned for, communicate closely with liaison, help greet people at registration

**Speakers** - 1-2 people - with direction from the entire committee, line up 3 speakers for the Saturday morning program, introduce them and make sure they are paid, if we decide on workshops, make sure workshop leaders have what they need and a designated person to introduce them.

**Historian** - 1-2 people to set up computer, help people access database, supervise collection of history books that people lend for the event, answer questions relating to genealogy

Another piece may be someone to solicit people to bring family heirlooms to show others in a museum display of sorts.

**Store/ Auction** - 1-2 people - plan and order souvenirs and have someone to sell them, solicit people to bring things to auction for the general fund, line up an auctioneer for the auction.

**Liaison with Facility** - Darrell Smucker

Plan and organize tours - Emily Smucker-Beidler (would like another person who is local to help) travel to all local sites, put together informational booklet for either self-guided tour or larger bus tours, depending on committee direction

**Membership to Association** - Jerry Smoker, keep track of who has paid membership dues and will be sent a newsletter, get money to proper place, keep up to date membership information.

As you can plainly see it takes many hands to make our Family Gatherings a success. If you have interest in serving in one of the above roles, please contact Stacey Delsh via e-mail at [sdelsh@gmail.com](mailto:sdelsh@gmail.com) and advise her of your interest. We are counting on many hands to make the 2021 SSS Family Gathering a success.



*Proposed headquarters for the 2021 SSS Family Gathering, Smithville, Ohio*

## Schmucker History from Europe through the Colonial Pre-Revolutionary Era

-written by John R. Smucker,  
edited by Emily Smucker-Beidler

A major theme and pillar in the story of the Schmucker family has been that of faith and discipleship. I have personally espoused that faith as a youth and it has sustained me for my 74 years...and I am counting on it for the year or so I have left. It only takes one generation to lose it and interestingly enough, often the connection with the family is lost with it as well.

Our family can look back on eight generations of faithful Christians. During my seminary days, H.S. Bender once made the statement that the reason the Amish/Mennonite church has survived is not because of great intellectual leaders or well educated persons, or even terrific leadership, but rather it has survived because the leaders were good, sincere people. Considering the men and women of these eight generations, there were no ministers in my direct line. Other than my father who taught grade school for about three years, all my other ancestors were farmers. I feel fortunate for this lineage. And as our society changes, I hope that my grandchildren can say the same as they spread their wings.

Currently, we do not know when the Schmucker family joined the Taufer or Anabaptist movement. These two movements had begun about 200 years before the Schmuckers left Switzerland, moving to France for eight years, and then finally settling in America. We can say this with a reasonable amount of confidence.

As a matter of historical significance, the Anabaptist movement had three basic areas of development. The first was in Holland. Anabaptists there experienced persecution from the Catholic Church and also the Reformed Church, however, eventual acceptance was more rapid here than in other locations. Secondly, Southern Germany was populated by Lutherans. Unfortunately, the Lutheran reformation did very little for the peasants and serfs. In practice, the Lutheran lords and princes were little different from those of the Catholic ruling class. This despite the fact that Luther's early preaching was championed by the peasants, who craved the message of freedom and opportunity.

For these peasants, in desperate circumstances, chose clubs and pitchforks, formed revolts and were mercilessly put down by the ruling powers. It is for this reason that rulers were highly suspicious of anything which smelled of anti-government or anti-church. Traveling Anabaptist preachers had eager converts, and many joined the Anabaptist community. However, the pressure from the ruling class stifled the nurture of congregations.

Third, in Switzerland, Anabaptists have a long history of bloody persecution and tight regulations. So by the time of Christian Schmucker, the pressure was not so much on the death sentence, as it was many restrictions on Anabaptist life. For instance, there is a reference to Christian Schmucker in

the archives in Berne, Switzerland which indicates that he was put in the Trasklewald Castle prison for four days. His charge was that of a teacher and a pietist. This may have been the last straw which caused the authorities to combat the Anabaptist message. As long as the Anabaptist remained relatively isolated, 3000 feet high up in their Alpine homes, the authorities looked away. But in this arrest, Christian Schmucker was down in their territory, actively preaching a message not sanctioned by the state church. The fact that he remained imprisoned for only four days and the evidence that the family shortly thereafter moved to France, indicates that leaving Switzerland was one of his choices.

The eight years in France were likely lived as sharecroppers. The Catholic princes who owned the land did not care about the tenants' religion as long as they were making money from the land. The Schmuckers probably felt like foreigners with little reason to be attached to the land. Some of those who remained in this general area for several generations prospered. They excelled in dairy cattle breeding. Indeed, the result of this time was the "Mennonite Cow," large as a Holstein, with Guernsey colors.

When William Penn began recruiting those seeking religious tolerance, it is understandable why these ousted Swiss tenant farmers found the lure of freedom of religion and owning one's own land a major draw. In 1752, the list of people leaving Europe on the St. Andrew had Christian Schmucker's name listed at the top. It also may indicate that he helped to organize this venture.

Was the situation in America an improvement over what they had in France? Some of the early Dutch Mennonites who came to Germantown wrote back to their home congregations pondering whether they had made a mistake in coming to America. The opportunity to own land had been fulfilled, but what would the future be like for them? Would their rejection of violence be tolerated? Would they be conscripted into the militia?

Just a few words to give an overview of the initial religious situation in Pennsylvania: William Penn, an English Quaker, was granted the land of Pennsylvania by the King of England in 1681. He could dispose of it in any way he chose, with unlimited power to govern the settlers with political institutions he thought best. Penn's first mission was to establish a place of refuge for English Quakers who were being oppressed in their own country, and to other religious groups who were being denied the usual civil and religious rites.

Beginning in 1710, and through 1756, there were continuous migrations of Mennonites from Switzerland and the German Palatinate. In this early period of time, about 3,000 Mennonites reached Pennsylvania and 400 Amish. By 1776, there were about 100,000 German speaking people in Pennsylvania, about one third of the population. Of that group, the Amish and Mennonites were less than 10%. Then the immigration waves from Europe to America began again after the French and Indian War in 1815.

## **SSS Family Association**

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### **WE ARE ON THE WEB!**

If you are interested in seeing back issues of the “SSS Family Newsletter”, audio files of “Family Stories” collected during the 2016 SSS Family Gathering in Lancaster, PA and other information collected , to date, please check our website, “[sssfamily.org](http://sssfamily.org)”. We appreciate the pro bono assistance of our webmaster, Scott Stoltzfus.

We are also on Facebook. Jenna (Smoker) Seeley is our Facebook “gatekeeper” and must be contacted via Facebook to gain access to our private site. To access our Facebook site contact: [jenna.seeley@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.seeley@gmail.com).

### **MEMBERSHIP IN THE SSS FAMILY ASSOCIATION**

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

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