

Claus Oblinger & Niclaus Oppliger

Claus (Niclaus) Oblinger (b. 1685, Germany)

- William Rinkenbach and nine others wrote the “History of the Oblinger-Oplinger-Uplinger Family” in 1964.
- Claus (Nicholas) Oblinger, his wife, two sons and three daughters, arrived in Philadelphia in 1724.
- Two sons migrated to Northampton and Lancaster Counties.
- The tombstone of youngest child Anna says she was born in 1724 in Schwarzenau, Germany.
- *“From whence Claus Oblinger came to Schwarzenau has not been proved, but it is highly probable that he came from the small city of Ohringen in Baden, east northeast of Heilbron, or its vicinity.”*
- Hence, Claus’ place of origin is not known, but assumed to be Germany.

Niclaus Oppliger (b. 1683, Switzerland)

- Willard L. (Bill) Oplinger, his brother Gerald G. Oplinger, and Robert L Hess PHD) wrote “Claus Oblinger, A Swiss Pioneer” in 2015. Bill published a revised edition in 2019.
- Revised version identified yet another Niclaus Oppliger. *“...the Niclaus Oppliger b. 1678 whom we believed to be Claus Oblinger prior to his emigration, was found by genealogist Richard Warren Davis to have died in 1745 in Switzerland.”*
- A different Niclaus Oppliger with strong family ties to our Claus Oblinger point to him being the true Claus Oblinger. This had been verified by family connections through Oppliger/Oblinger, Steiner/Stonier, and Farni/Forney family lines. This Claus was born in 1683 in Suderen, Bern Canton, Switzerland, emigrated to PA in the late 1720’s.
- It’s difficult to resolve whether Anna’s parents lived in Schwarzenau prior to her birth, or whether she was born in Schwarzenau or at an earlier date – she was only 2 when she came to America.
- Family name “Oppliger” was derived from small village of Oppligen located in the Bern Canton, 1-1/2 miles from Oberdiessbach.
- Note: Bern Switzerland, is only 253 miles to the west of Konstanz, Germany, 219 miles to Uberlingen, Germany!

- Evidence of Niclaus Oppliger living in Switzerland around that time, but not in Germany
- Evidence of Niclaus Oppliger baptized in Oberdiessbach (less than 2 miles from Oppligen) on 5/17/1683, and married Catherina Steiner from Steffisburg on 3/19/1706, also at Oberdiessbach.
- Also evidence of a daughter Barbara born in 1701, but did not emigrate with him – may have died in infancy, or decided to stay in Switzerland.

Dunkard or Mennonite?

- Was Claus a Dunkard and associated with Peter Becker? Or were they both coincidentally buried in the same cemetery, which became a Dunkard cemetery.
- Or was he a Mennonite?
 - o If we have the correct Niclaus, his family for generations had strong Anabaptist or Mennonite beliefs.
 - o There is evidence that while living at Indian Creek, Claus thought of himself as a Mennonite.
 - o Witnesses to his will (including his own third cousin Christian Stauffer. Jacob Funck, and Samuel Meier) and the executors of his estate were all recent Mennonite immigrants.

My Conclusion

While some questions may remain, evidence is strong that Niclaus/Claus Oppliger from Switzerland became our Claus Oblinger

- This does not negate the research of William Rinkenbach and others but is based on new evidence. It also answers some questions raised and left unanswered by Mr. Rinkenbach.
- I’ve updated the “official” Oplinger Genealogy to reflect this convergence of Niclaus Oppliger with Claus Oblinger, adding the available ancestry of Niclaus Oppliger, and adding his daughter Barbara.

Thanks to Bill Oplinger and his companions for their research. Copies of both the Rinkenbach and Bill Willard documents are available on our new web site.

David Bailly
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