

The 107th Oplinger Family Reunion

It all began in May of 1914 when Reuben Oplinger and William H. Oplinger both of Danielsville PA, conceived the idea of an Oplinger Family Reunion. They made a list of living members of the family and approached Elwood E. Oplinger of Allentown. Elwood began his duties as temporary organizer and general secretary of the reunion on July 29, 1914. The first reunion became a reality on Saturday, September 5, 1914, at Edgemont Park, in Harpers, PA. About 400 people attended, of which "about 200 belonged to the family." The program included two addresses, including one in Pa. German, and a violin and piano duet.

Now, on the 110th anniversary, Saturday, August 26, 2023, a group of 33 members of the Oplinger family gathered on the deck of the Blue Mountain Drive-in Restaurant in Danielsville to celebrate the 107th Reunion of the Oplinger-Oblinger-Uplinger Family. This was the third largest attendance in the past 14 reunions, not counting the seventy who attended the special 100th Anniversary in 2015. The ages of those gathered ranged from four children under 12 to three nonagenarians (90+).

After the traditional Pledge to the Flag and singing of "My Country 'Tis of Thee," the group shared family introductions and recent news. Correspondence from three members of the George Washington Oplinger lineage based in Ohio were shared. The business meeting reelected the four officers – President: David Baily, Vice President: Rev. Jim Bongard, Secretary: Winfield Miller, and Treasurer: Kathleen McDermott. The 2024 reunion date was set for Saturday, August 24. Noting that we will be observing 300 years since the arrival of Claus Oblinger (a.k.a. Niclaus Oppliger) in 1724, ideas were shared for marking this milestone. Jim then provided an overview of the Oplinger.org web site which contains historical pictures, programs of almost all past reunions, historical newspaper accounts, a redacted genealogy, and other items of interest. David shared plans for trialing a move of the Oplinger genealogy from his computer to Ancestry.com or a similar more-readily accessible site. Our genealogy file now contains over 7,300 names.

Concluding with the traditional awarding of prizes for three selected badge numbers, oldest man and woman present, youngest child present, oldest and youngest married couples, and person traveling the longest distance, the business meeting was followed with the reading of the names of those who have died in the past year, and the singing of "God Be With You Till We Meet Again." Games followed, with the traditional 'Cake Walk,' children's games, and 'Bingo' for the adults. The afternoon concluded with almost everyone gathering in the restaurant for an early evening meal.

Remembering those who have gone on before us, reliving some of the memories and traditions (including a program and badges, the Cake Walk, the \$1 coin for children, Bingo, and children's games), continuing the friendships of extended family members (cousins several times removed – but who's counting?), and introducing the 11th and 12th generations of Oplinger descendants in America to some of the same traditions we grew up with – this is the legacy of the Oplinger Family Reunion.

Hope to see you on August 24 next year as we celebrate 300 years in America!