

The 108th Oplinger Family Reunion – 300 Years in America

A warm, sunny afternoon was the backdrop for the 108th Oplinger-Uplinger-Oblinger reunion in Danielsville, PA. Thirty-one people came together to remember the past, to catch up on the present, and to plan for the future. While the number of participants has stayed nearly the same for the past few years, some new faces joined the group. First-time attendees included three from the Uplinger side of the family living in Minnesota and Arizona. Some familiar faces were absent this year and we noted their absence with fondness. Such is the continuous change that has kept the reunion alive for over 100 years.

Following the traditional opening with the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of “My Country Tis of Thee” and the invocation, each one shared a brief introduction and summary of notable events of the past year. In recognition of the 300th anniversary of Claus Oblinger (a.k.a. Niclaus Oppliger) arriving in Philadelphia from Europe, a few challenging questions were posed. Would you have been able to answer the following? From where did our ancestors come? (Schwarzenau, Germany or Oppligen, Switzerland) How many family members travelled with Claus and what were their names? (6 – wife Catherine, sons Nicholas and Christian, and daughters Catherine, Maria, and Anna) How long did it take in the 1700’s to sail from Europe to America (According to Google, 6-10 weeks).

The business session was brief and confirmed the officers for 2024-25 as remaining the same: President – David Baily, Vice President – Rev. Jim Bongard, Secretary – Winfield Miller, and Treasurer – Kathleen McDermott.. No nominations were received for additional Vice Presidents in the hope of bringing on new leaders to assure continuing reunions in the future. I committed to holding annual reunions through our 110th in two years and will revisit the options if no new Vice Presidents have surfaced. Next year’s reunion will be held on Saturday, August 23, 2025, at the Blue Mountain Restaurant. Continuing annual reunions depends on additional people helping with the planning and execution – one volunteer offered to help. Commemorative pens engraved with “108th Reunion – 300 Years in America” were handed out.

Some discussion was held on the Oplinger.org website which continues to gain in use. A plea for a new webmaster to maintain the site remains unanswered. With regards to the genealogy records which have been maintained on a personal computer, the group approved moving forward with a trial of exporting the data into Ancestry.com to enable others to help maintain the data and to improve the visibility of the data both to members of our group and other interested persons. Data for living persons will be hidden unless specifically granted by our administrator to members of our group.

The remainder of the afternoon saw the awarding of prizes for oldest (92!) and youngest (16) members present, couples married the longest and most recently, and the family travelling the longest distance (Minneapolis). Following the reading of the names of those who passed away in the past year the meeting concluded with singing of “God Be with You till We Meet Again”.

The games included the traditional ‘CakeWalk’ (if your number was called, you selected from an assortment of baked goods) and Bingo. As the youngest person present was a teenager, there were no children’s games this year. The group then moved into the restaurant for the evening meal.

David Baily, President