

Schmucker • Smoker • Smucker



John Schmucker Homestead

Family Association Newsletter

Winter 2025-2026

President's Corner

by Jim Smoker

Greetings Cousins,

2026 Family Gathering

I am excited to share the plans for our 50th Anniversary Schmucker-Smoker-Smucker Family Gathering which will be held July 17 and 18, 2026 at the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead in Wyomissing, PA. The theme for our gathering is "Interconnected Legacies". Inside this issue you will find the tentative schedule of activities and registration information. I am very grateful for the assistance of Elam Stoltzfus, Executive Director of the Nicholas Stoltzfus House Preservation Committee, Emily Smucker-Beidler, SSS FA Board member, and Joanne Smoker for their assistance, to date, in pulling this Gathering together. I hope you will join us as the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead holds special meaning to those of us who are descendants of John Schmucker and Barbara Stoltzfus Schmucker (a daughter of Nicholas Stoltzfus) and the temporary residence of John and Barbara. Its been said that more than a third of us descended from John and Barbara. Participants will have access to tour the "Homestead", the "Stone House" in Wyomissing Park, an optional bus trip to Berks and Lancaster Counties heritage sites, to learn more about our family history and stories, and to share in extended family time together.

SSS FA at the Crossroads

The SSS FA was founded nearly 50 years ago through the efforts of Rev. John R. Smucker, Kathryn Aushliman, Silas Smucker, and Jane Smoker Davidson. I have appealed to our membership the past several years for volunteers to come forward to continue in the leadership roles of President-elect, Board members, Newsletter editor, and Family Historian/Genealogist, Treasurer, and Secretary. Should anyone be interested in "self-nominating" for any one of these positions, I, and individuals currently holding these roles, will gladly share the responsibilities of the various roles and give the individual(s) time to acclimate to the role they prefer over the coming year. It has been an honor and a wonderful learning experience to serve the SSS FA over the past 20 years, but at 78 years of age, it is time for me and others to pass the baton on.

Should no individuals come forward, the Board has considered several alternatives for the dissolution of the SSS FA. I sincerely hope that the SSS FA will continue on into the 22nd century. Please contact me should you have interest in assisting in moving our SSS FA forward.

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Your SSS Family Association Officers, Board Members, and Volunteers

Jim (James M. Smoker), President
Eber Rice-Smucker, Vice President
and Registrar
Stacey Delsh, Secretary
Darrell Smucker, Treasurer
Helen Ault, Board Member and
Genealogist
Emily Smucker Beidler, Board Member
Samuel Smucker, SSS/FA Website
Coordinator
Thomas Smucker, SSS/FA Historian
Jenna Seeley, SSS/FA Facebook
Coordinator

What Anabaptism Means to Me

Emily Smucker-Beidler

I'm a Mennonite preacher's kid - so I learned Anabaptist history and theology from a young age. Conrad Grebel, Felix Mantz, Menno Simons, Jakob Aman...and the theological tenets - believer's baptism, peace over force, importance of community...I read the books, I took the tests, and yes - I'm an anabaptist too...what's not to like? Anabaptism was like a product, something historic and static, tied up neatly with a bow.

Then there was another layer - my dad was also an avid genealogist. And I grew up learning that every line of my family tree led back to Switzerland to an Anabaptist that came to Pennsylvania in search of religion freedom. I'm the ninth generation descending from Christian and Barbara Schmucker who came over in 1752 on the St. Andrew. My father made sure to pass on family stories that came before us - of losing land, hiding from authorities, worshipping in caves, imprisonment - all for their Anabaptist faith., It can be a heavy backpack of legacy to carry - I mean, what have you done for your faith lately?

Then this past fall, Lorin and I had the opportunity to go on an Anabaptist family history tour, with special emphasis on the Schmucker name. And my image of Anabaptism as that nice neat package began to change.

We were staying in a little Swiss town, Beatenburg, which is half way up the Niederhorn mountain. We had just travelled down the road to Schmoken, where one farm remains today, still farmed by a Schmoker family.

Then we walked the opposite direction on Smucker Road, Schmoken Strasse, to the Reformed church where my ancestors Christian and Barbara would have worshipped. Several renovations have happened in that space over the last 200plus years, but as I looked to the right at the ornate balcony of a pulpit where clergy would ascend the steps and speak down to the congregation, I imagined how that hierarchy would have felt. Then I looked to the left and saw a painting embedded into the wall from 1619, listing all of the families that had contributed to the building of this Reformed church. And there, on the wall, was the Schmucker family crest.

And I wondered when that first little bit of uneasiness started to percolate in Christian and Barbara....you know, that uneasy feeling in the pit of your stomach when someone says something and it just doesn't quite hit you right - and you may not even be able to wrap words around it, but you know that you can't buy in to it. Even if generations before you have believed this, it isn't for you.

There must have been some very strong marriages - spouses that could talk through these newly developing questions. I doubt they knew what perils would come as a result of believing differently than the state sanctioned church - especially when they were intertwined with family traditions. I imagine finding words for these new ideas were a little clumsy at first - that the small communities of what we now call Anabaptists were finding their way together, being vulnerable to one another as they began to shape theology.

And maybe that's more of what Anabaptism means...not just a theological product, tied up with a bow, but that process of listening. Of being sensitive to that little bit of uneasiness in the pit of your stomach and having a community that is a safe place to pour it all out like lumpy brown sugar and sift through it, together, knowing you'll be heard, and respected.

In that sense, I hope that we can be a truly Anabaptist community. Not just for the tenets of our beliefs, but for the the Anabaptist process. I hope that when our children and youth start ask questions, that they know they're in a safe place to do so. And when new people start calling our church home, they know that they can question too, that their fresh perspectives are welcome and valued. I hope we greet questions, not with resistance, but with and openness that places God's love first.

May we be a safe place for one another. May we be an Anabaptist community

Mennonite Life Membership Benefits

Each year we pay a "family association membership" in accordance with our agreement with Mennonite Life (Formerly The Lancaster Mennonite Historical Center). This family association membership entitles members with complimentary admission to:

- The 1719 Museum:
Use code: fam26-1719
- Mennonite Life Museum:
Use code: fam26-mlife
- Biblical Tabernacle Experience:
Use code: fam25-bte

Also, you may access the online resources, including the SSS Genealogy database with:

Login ID: member
Password: learn&grow26

Preliminary Schedule SSS Family Gathering

at the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead
1700 Tulpehocken Road, Wyomissing, PA
July 17 & 18, 2026

“Interconnected Legacies”

Friday, July 17

- 8 AM “Early Birds” Registration & Continental Breakfast
- 9:30 AM-3:30 PM Bus Tour of 18th Century Amish-Mennonite Homesteads in Berks & Lancaster Counties, Led by Elam Stoltzfus & Emily Smucker Beidler
(Separate \$ Pre-registration required - \$60 per person)
- 9:30 AM-5:00 PM Open Time:
- Tour the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead
 - Tour the John and Barbara Schmucker “Stone House” which will be open to family members
 - Visit the exhibits in the Barn
 - Take a chance on the silent auction
 - Visit the Masthof Book Store collections in the Barn
 - “Interactive Digital Family History” project by Tom Smucker
 - Learn how to access our SSS Family Genealogy database with Eber Rice-Smucker (tentative)
 - Meet the Author – Sue (Stoltzfus) Hooley

- 5:00 PM-6:30 PM Chicken BBQ Dinner *(Included in Registration)*
- 6:30 PM Welcoming Words – Jim Smoker
- 6:45 – 7:45PM “Our Schmucker-Smoker-Smucker Story,” by Emily Smucker-Beidler

Saturday, July 18

- 8:00-8:45 AM Continental Breakfast *(Included in Registration)*; late-comers registration
- 8:45-9:00 AM Welcoming Words
- 9:00-10:00 AM “Economic Life in 18th Century Berks County,” by
- 10:00-11:00 AM “Be the Keeper of Your Family Stories,” by Sue Hooley
- 11:00-11:30 AM Discussion and vote on the future of our SSS FA
- 11:30-1:00 PM Chicken Corn Soup Luncheon *(Included in Registration)*
- 1:00-2:00 PM Visit the Barn and last chances on silent auction
- 2:00-3:00 PM “The Northkill Community and its Influence on the Amish-Mennonite Community,” by Elam Stoltzfus
- 3:00-3:30 PM Amish Youth Sing (Tentative)
- 3:30-4:00 PM Closing and Hymn Sing led by John D. Smucker



The Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead, Wyomissing, PA

50th Anniversary SSS Family Gathering Registration Form

Our 2026 Family Gathering will be held July 17 & 18 at the Nicholas Stoltzfus Homestead in Wyomissing, PA . The Adult fee covers meals and all event related costs. The Children's fee (Ages 16 and under) covers meals. The optional bus trip fee is separate fee which covers the rental of the bus and a bag lunch. Registration for the bus trip is limited to the first 50 people.

Registration deadline is June 1, 2026

Adult Attendees (please type or print names):

Names of Children Attendees:

Number of Adults _____ X \$60.00 = \$ _____

Number of Children _____ X \$20.00 = \$ _____

Bus Trip Registration:

Please send a check for the total amount to:

Darrell Smucker, Treasurer, SSS Family Association
1497 Morgan Street, Wooster, Ohio 44691-1541

Names of Participants:

Mailing address and Email address of individual whose name appears on the check:

Number of Bus Participants _____ X \$60.00 = \$ _____

Grand Total Due: \$ _____



Our Facebook page is a private group site and access is coordinated by Jenna (Smoker) Seeley.
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/smucker>
Our Website address and content is changing thanks to the efforts of Sam and Tom Smucker.
To access the new site:
<https://www.schmuckerfamilies.org>.

SSS FAMILY MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

The SSS FA holds an organizational membership in Mennonite Life (Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, Lancaster, PA). As such you are welcomed to access the member only sites on their website as well as our SSS FA genealogy database. Mennonite Life also provides members with:

- Member rates on learning tours, classes, museum admission, and merchandise
- Free on-site access to their unique library, archival collections, and to Ancestry.com
- Genealogical research services at member rates
- Member-only access to online resources through “mennonitelife.org” Login ID: member Password for 2024 is “mlife24access” and for 2025 is “research25mlife”
- To access our SSS FA database:
 - Log onto www.mennonitelife.org as a member
 - Go to the bottom of the home page and Click on “Archives and Library”
 - Click on “Search Archival Catalog”
 - At “Choose a Database”, Click on “Genealogy”
 - At “Search Collection”, Click on “Schmucker-Smoker-Smucker Family...”

SSS FA Membership

Schmucker-Smoker-Smucker Family Association (SSSFA) “Constitution & By-laws” indicate active membership requires:

- Attending a family gathering held every five years
or
- Contributing financially [\$10/minimum per year]

Direct costs of SSSFA primarily include:

- Annual fee to Mennonite Life (fka Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society) to maintain access to our genealogy database & historic documents.
- Website domain
- Newsletter

We hope you will consider a donation to maintain or begin your membership status. Note: If you attended the SSSFA Family Gathering in 2021 in Smithville, Ohio, you are considered to be a member in good standing.

Name(s): _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Amount Donated: _____

Mail to: Darrell Smucker, Treasurer, SSSFA,
1497 Morgan Street, Wooster, Ohio, 44691-1541

Treasurer’s Report

by Darrell Smucker

GENERAL FUND

Our General Fund Cash Balance on Hand \$3406.63 for the period ending 10/31/25.

Note: This includes \$1380 in total donations in 2025

SSS Family Association

c/o James Smoker

3435 Bull Road

York, PA 17408-9755

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2025 SSS Donors Roll

Darrell Smucker, Treasurer

The SSS FA Board extends its gratitude to the individuals who contributed to furthering the purpose of their family association.

Eber Rice-Smucker
Darrell and Brenda Smucker
Joanne Smucker
I. Rex & Diane Miller
Michael D. and Constance Smoker
Alan D. and Teri Zeigler
Cheryl Parsons
Ronald and Bonita Stoltzfus
Bethany A Sherrieb
Jean and Robert Rodgers
Carol J. Smucker

Susan Gratz
Dan King
Elmeta F. and Robert L. Shelly
Jim Smoker
Janet M. Smucker
Edward J. & Kathryn S. Miller
Lucinda (Schmucker) & David Feess
Mary J. Troyer
John e. Smucker III
Helen Bridgeman
James and Tammy Smucker

Kevin D. and Judy Smoker
Jon N. and Phyllis Diller
Erma Mae (Smoker) Perkins
Julia and Bob Beyeler
Len and Malinda Stoltzfus
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