

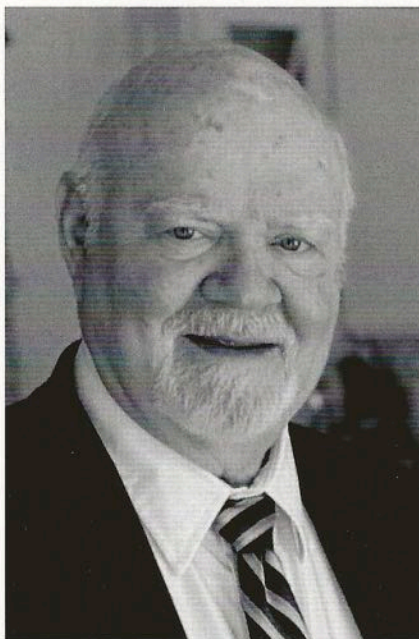
Commemorating the 319th Anniversary of the Kolb Family's Arrival in America

KOLB-KULP-CULP Family Association, Inc.

96th Family Reunion: SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2026

Lower Skippack Mennonite Church, 12:30 p.m.

892 Evansburg Road, Skippack, PA



Our Speaker: Rev. Robert Gerhart

“The Rev. George Bechtel ‘Returns’ to the 21st Century”

We are excited to announce that the **Rev. Robert “Bob” Gerhart** will be joining us as the incarnation of the Rev. George Bechtel.

Robert W. Gerhart, recently retired after 62 years of Pastoral Ministry, having served churches in Quakertown; Downey, California; Maseru, Lesotho (in southern Africa); Bally PA; and Springfield, Upper Bucks County. His missionary service in Southern Africa, with the Africa Inter-Mennonite Mission, also led to seven years as a Mission staff person for AIMM in Elkhart, Indiana, before returning to his home town of Bally in 1988, to pastor the Hereford Mennonite Church for the next twenty years.

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**2026 Kolb, Kulp, Culp Family Reunion
Lower Skippack Mennonite Church
PROGRAM**

12:30 p.m. Meet & Greet

Doxology Ed & Kay Kulp & Family

1:00 p.m. Lunch ("Groaning Board")

2:00 p.m. Program Introduction Jack Oberholtzer

Remembrance of our Religious Heritage

Tribute to Deceased Members (*with moment of silence*)

Report of Secretary Jack Oberholtzer

Report of Treasurer Mark Moyer

Offering Mark Moyer

Song (during offering) *America the Beautiful*...Ed & Kay Kulp & Family

Recognition of Youngest, Oldest & Longest Distance Traveled

Report of Nominating Committee

Program: "*Rev. George Bechtel 'Returns' to the 21st Century*"..Bob Gerhart

Benediction: *God Be With You Till We Meet Again*...

Ed & Kay Kulp & Family

3:30 p.m. Adjournment

Home Page for the WEBSITE is <https://kolb-kulp-culp.org>

**WEBSITE created by and now dedicated to our longtime genealogist
GLENN H. LANDIS**

Hello Kolb-Kulp-Culp Family & Friends:

As you are well aware, this year marks the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia.

The event garnered mixed feelings among our German ancestors. Some wanted to remain loyal to the original oath they took to the British Crown and not violate their core pacifist beliefs. A few wanted to support the new American government and break away from England. But most tried to remain neutral and not appear to favor either side, which still lead to conflict. (Spoiler alert for a possible summer newsletter topic.)

Our country has hosted deep divisions on many subjects over the years, so today's political turmoil is not atypical. But I think we can all agree that we owe a great deal of gratitude to those early Palatinate Germans, who left their homes, crossed the Atlantic, and built a new life near where we meet every year. Without those who came to settle in "Penn's Woods" at his urging, American culture would look much different, and likely be far less vibrant, than it does today. Did you know that Americans of German descent still make up the largest ancestry group of Americans, over 40 million people or at least 12% of the population?

For over a century now, the Kolb/Kulp/Culp families have gathered in reunion, in an enduring testament to the dedication of those who want to preserve our shared heritage.

This year we will be meeting on **June 14th**, and as always, we will be in the Social Hall of the **Lower Skippack Mennonite Church**, starting at **12:30 p.m.**, and if we are very lucky, may have a reincarnated visit from **Rev. George Bechtel**, a renowned pastor of the Mennonites, to tell us what life was like over 250 years ago (see insert for his bio). Many thanks to **Bob Gerhart** for bringing him to us this year. I have heard many great things about Bob's presentations and I am sure he will not disappoint.

Kathy and Alan Kratz will be providing our groaning board of sandwich makings and some sides, but please bring your own side favorites and, of course, deserts! **Contact Jack Oberholtzer at 215-534-0194 or jeoberho@comcast.net by June 7th to let us know how many will be coming.**

Donna Gerber will be available to help with any genealogy questions.

Mark Moyer will have Kulp crest mugs and some Kulp crest t-shirts for sale. Please fill out the attached form or contact him directly at vampyre46@verizon.net or 215-368-3785 if you are interested. Unfortunately, due to the rise in postal rates, we have to add \$8 to the by-mail purchases.

(Continued on Page 4)

Executive Committee Letter (Continued from Page 3)

Jack will have some research materials available for your review.

We are in need of volunteers to help with the Reunion! On Reunion Day, we welcome help with setup, check-in, and clean up. Please also share send your ideas for future programs and any family history research with Jack so it can be added to the website.

Our **KKC Family Association** counts on **support from its members** to cover the roughly \$1500 of annual expenses for hosting the reunion, providing a catered lunch, and a speaker, so every donation truly makes a difference. You can make a check out to the "Kolb, Kulp, Culp Family Association" and include it with your reunion attendance response you mail in or drop it in the offering basket at the reunion.

Your presence and that of the next generation at our reunions reflects a shared commitment of remembering and preserving our heritage. With sincere thanks!

Kolb-Kulp-Culp Reunion Executive Committee

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OUR SPEAKER (Cont'd): Here, Pastor Gerhart discovered the fascinating history of Rev. Hans George Bechtel (1706-1759), the Hereford congregation's founder and the first Mennonite preacher to reside in Berks County, having arrived in 1728. With a life-long interest in local history, Pastor Bob Gerhart has brought Rev. George Bechtel "back to life" with his historically accurate, costumed impersonation.

During Rev. George Bechtel's "return" to the 21st Century, to attend the Kolb-Kulp-Culp Reunion, he will share his 18th Century experiences and some memories of the Kolb brothers, who were his contemporaries and colleagues in ministry in south-eastern Pennsylvania. George, who was born the same year as Benjamin Franklin, was also acquainted with Henry Antes of Frederick and heard the English evangelist George Whitefield preach during his travels through the colony of Pennsylvania.

Bob Gerhart grew up in Eastern Berks County and is a graduate of Boyertown Area High School and, in 1963, graduated from Grace Bible Institute in Omaha, Nebraska. During his college days, he met his wife, Joyce, originally from Isabel, South Dakota. After marriage in 1963, Bob began studies at Reformed Episcopal Seminary in Philadelphia, while serving in Quakertown. He graduated with a Divinity degree in 1967. He later earned a Doctorate in Ministry in 2005 from Westminster Theological Seminary.

Ordained in the General Conference Mennonite Church in 1964, Bob served in various denominational positions. In 1998, he was part of a movement that led to the formation of AMEC, the Alliance Mennonite Evangelical Congregations. Pastor Gerhart became the first Executive Director of AMEC, serving from 2002 to 2020.

In Memoriam 2026

<i>Name and Address (all in PA unless noted)</i>	<i>Died</i>	<i>Age</i>
*William Saylor Wise, Schwenksville	September 11, 2024	88
*Edward L. Wentz, Jr., Oak Ridge, NC and Telford	October 20, 2024	85
Eveyln Esther Detweiler, Telford	December 29, 2024	82
Timothy Patrick Kulp, Pottsgrove	December 31, 2024	52
James Ellsworth Kulp, Lynchburg, VA	January 12, 2025	91
David Allen Kulp, Stroudsburg	January 31, 2025	59
Charles L. Kratz, Telford	February 25, 2025	90
Edward J. Kolb, Washington Township	February 27, 2025	85
*Martha Kolb, Gilbertsville	March 6, 2025	75
Kathleen L. Stoltzfus, Harleysville	March 9, 2025	65
Jean M. Kolb, Philadelphia	May 4, 2025	86
*Willard S. Kolb, Frederick	May 16, 2025	96
Vivian F. Dane, Telford	May 18, 2025	78
Timothy Kulp, Telford	May 24, 2025	64
*Doris A. Smith, Telford	June 12, 2025	98
Ruth A. Kulp, Manheim	June 15, 2025	85
Jeremy Dean Kulp, Quakertown	July 16, 2025	38
Susan I. Ciccarone, Eagleville	July 31, 2025	75
Robert Allen Kulp, Upper Salford Township	August 4, 2025	64
Robert M. Kulp, Hatfield	August 5, 2025	93
Henry K. Tyson, Quakertown	August 5, 2025	95
Robert M. Kulp, Hatfield	August, 15, 2025	93
*Stephen Shockley, Frankford, DE	September 1, 2025	69
Theodore J. Lazowicki, Jr., Harleysville	October 9, 2025	61
Charles B. Kolb, Spinnerstown	October 25, 2025	86
Gordon R. Kulp, Sr., Pennsburg	November 5, 2025	91
Audry Nace, Lansdale	November 11, 2025	88
Barbara A. Kulp, Bath	November 30, 2025	78
Blakely K. Neal, Hatfield	December 15, 2025	89
Michael J. Kulp, Broomall	December 14, 2025	84
Mary Elaine (Kolb) Moser, Mertztown	December 27, 2025	79
*Phyllis Naomi (Kulp) Eller, La Verne, CA	January 13, 2026	95
*June Irene Gerber, Sellersville	January 20, 2026	86
Franklin D. Kulp, Sr., Birdsboro	February 1, 2026	86
Geraldine Kulp, Harleysville	March 7, 2026	98
Anna Mae Kulp, Manheim	March 15, 2026	95

* = On or related to someone on our Kulp Reunion Mailing List

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Many thanks to **Jennie Sperling** and others for sending names to the "In Memoriam". If you have a family member you would like recognized, please send the information to our secretary, Jack Oberholtzer, 2377 Magnolia Way, Jamison, PA18929 or jeoberho@comcast.net.

Rev. Hans George Bechtel (1706-1759)

Hans George Bechtel was born in Mannheim, Germany, about 1706 (some sources say 1710). He became a Mennonite minister in the Palatinate in 1727.

It is believed George was nephew of Bishop Hans Jacob Bechtel (d. 1739), who came to Pennsylvania about 1720, settling north of present-day Pottstown. Jacob's property included what was later known as "Ringing Rocks Farm." He ministered to those groups of 2-4 families on what was then the frontier, along the Manatawny Creek watershed of the Schuylkill River, stretching from the Pottstown area into Hereford. Jacob ministered with Bishop Daniel Langenacker (arr. 1719/1722). Needing help with this growing region, Jacob summoned George, to Pennsylvania to help minister.

The following year, George or "Jörg Bechtel" boarded the Ship Mortonhouse, with John Coultas the Master, in Rotterdam, bound for Deal, England. After gaining clearance in Deal, the ship sailed for America on 15 June 1728, arriving in Philadelphia on 23 August 1728. He took the oath of allegiance the next day and was naturalized by an Act of the Pennsylvania Assembly passed on 6 February 1730.

George settled north of Pottstown at Bally, near Hereford, in what is now, Washington Township, in southeastern Berks County, Pennsylvania. He was a farmer and weaver. He married Maria ---, possibly the daughter of a Kolb, and they had seven children, six sons and a daughter.

Peter Moll (a close friend and possibly his brother-in-law) arrived in Philadelphia the following year on 19 August 1729 on the same ship, also settling near Hereford. Both probably had groups of Mennonites travel with and homestead with them in this area. Together, George and Peter became ministers of the Hereford and Manatant Churches from 1728-1759. They first met in family homes, but established the first meeting house in Hereford in 1732, which was torn and replaced with a larger structure in 1755.

The Bechtel Family Bible, published in 1720 in Basel (now Switzerland), was sent to George by his father in 1730. It was rebound in 1874 by another family member and today is part of the collection at the Mennonite Heritage Center.

During the time of George's ministry, three major events occurred: the publication of the Martyrs Mirror in America translated from Dutch to German; in 1740, the preaching of English evangelist George Whitefield at the Henry Antes House in Skippack to over 2,000 people, including many German settlers; and the French and Indian War (1754-1763).

George himself became a Mennonite Bishop shortly before his death.

On 19 March 1759, Peter Moll and George Bechtel died hours apart on the same day.

The present-day village of Bechtelsville was laid out by George's grandson, John S. Bechtel (1786-1868).



Kolb, Kulp, Culp Family Association, Inc.

319th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION at the 96th REUNION:

SUNDAY JUNE 14, 2026

Lower Skippack Mennonite Church, 12:30 P.M.

892 Evansburg Road, Skippack, PA

We look forward to our get together starting at 12:30, with lunch beginning at 1:00 p.m. Bring your favorite side dishes and desserts for the **GROANING BOARD!**

Please let us know by June 7th, 2026 if you plan to attend the luncheon!

FOR RESERVATIONS, DIRECTIONS, QUESTIONS or if YOU NEED ASSISTANCE,

Please contact: Jack Oberholtzer at 215-534-0194 or jeoberho@comcast.net

KKC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

“OPEN”, President

“OPEN”, Vice President

Mark Moyer, Treasurer.528 Ramblewood Lane, North Wales, PA 19454

Vampyre46@verizon.net

Jack Oberholtzer, Secretary 2377 Magnolia Way, Jamison, PA 18929

jeoberho@comcast.net

Donna Gerber, Genealogist P. O. Box 1246, Skippack, PA 19474

djgerber88@aol.com

Ed & Kay Kulp/Carol Wenger, Music

**TO RESERVE LUNCH, MAKE A DONATION OR ORDER KULP ITEMS BY MAIL,
PLEASE SEND THE TEAR-OFF BELOW**

Your Name _____

KULP ITEMS FOR SALE ORDER FORM:

Address _____

Please send me a T-Shirt with the Family Crest

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Sizes: S M L XL (circle desired size)

I **will/will not** be attending with a total of _____ people.

\$25 at Reunion, \$33 by mail

Please note my contribution of \$ _____

NEW ITEM! Please send me a Coffee Mug

Mail this form with check to the

\$10 at Reunion, \$18 by mail

Kolb, Kulp, Culp Family Association, Inc.

COLOR PHOTO (12 x 18) of the 300th Anniversary Group

c/o Jack Oberholtzer

\$15 at Reunion, \$23 by mail

2377 Magnolia Way, Jamison, PA 18929