

Joseph G. Overholt-Harvey K. Smith Family Books & Papers

(Hist. Mss. 1-429). Donated by Shirley E. Moyer, Crofton, MD, on behalf of her family.

This is a fairly small collection of papers and books from the family of carpenter Joseph G. Overholt (1832-1905) and Elizabeth Leatherman Overholt and their daughter Barbara Overholt who married Harvey K. Smith, all of Bedminster Twp., Bucks County, and members of the old Deep Run Mennonite Congregation. These materials would have been a part of the larger Overholt-Smith family collection which was dispersed after Barbara Overholt Smith died in the 1960s. The surviving collection includes small account books, *auction posters, music books, musical manuscripts, an autograph album from 1855, estate papers, a dowry record from the 1850s, photographs (early 20th cen.), as well as hymnbooks and songbooks from about 1798 to 1885. Besides being a busy carpenter/builder (based on the manuscript records), Joseph Overholt must have been a gifted songleader or Singing School teacher in the Deep Run Mennonite congregation and community, based on the number of signed music and hymnbooks and the musical manuscripts he left behind. These Overholt books and papers are found not only in this small collection, but in a couple of other small collections found here at the Mennonite Heritage Center, from other sources.

One valuable record book found in this collection is a sketch book and record of Joseph Overholt's barn and house building activity in the early 1860s in the Bedminster-Hilltown area of Bucks Co. This contains simple floor plans and framing plans for houses and barns which he built. In total, the collection includes papers and books from three or four generations of the Overholt-Smith family, if we include the children of Harvey & Barbara Smith. There are a couple of items owned and signed by Elizabeth Leatherman (from before her marriage to Joseph Overholt), and a couple of papers/records from Joseph Overholt's father Abraham, including a simple dowry record. So the family collection, though no longer complete, contains a glimpse into three or four generations of this old Deep Run Mennonite family of the mid-late 19th century.

Other highlights:

-*Der leichte Unterricht von der Vocal Musik* (compiled by Joseph Doll). Published by Johan Wyeth, Harrisburg, 1810. (owned & signed by Henrich Kulp, no date)/

-*Die Neue Choral Harmonie...* Compiled by S. M. Musselman, Lower Salford, 1844. (owned & signed by Elizabeth Leatherman, 1859).

-*The Easy Instructor or new method of teaching Sacred Harmony...* Compiled by Wm. Little & Wm. Smith, 1798. (owned & signed by Joseph G. Overholt, 1872).

-A collection of small, manuscript tune slips (with hymn-tunes), mid-19th century, written and used by Joseph G. Overholt, a songleader or singing school teacher in the Deep Run Mennonite community.

*Auction posters stored in oversize folder (H.M. 1-429) in broadside drawer, flat file (vault).

-Joel D. Alderfer, Librarian/curator, Mennonite Heritage Center, Harleysville, PA – 8/25/06