



Vahsholtz Cousins

March, 2018

www.vahsholtz.com

Wisconsin

July 12-15, 2018

Here We Come!

*At the Idaho Cousins Reunion in 2016, Sharon and Lloyd Powless agreed Wisconsin would host the 2018 Reunion. Doing so has proved to be quite a challenge, due in part to Lloyd's health issues. Nevertheless, the Vahsholtz families in that area have pulled together and planned an event that looks like it will be a winner! Yes, it will be quite a journey for many of you, but so was Idaho, and remember how much fun we had there! Make the trip if you can, and get your reservations in soon! The following update was prepared by several of your hosts. **Your editors***

HEY COUSINS, I'm looking forward to meeting all of you! I know that Sharon and Lloyd have been attending these reunions for years; but I've never had the chance before.

Sharon, her sister Gayle and I, have had our DNA tests done. I thought it would be fun if others who have had DNA tests done to bring your information to the Reunion and we can compare our countries of origin and ancestors we all have in common. Having a cup of coffee with you, visiting and getting to know you is tops on my list for our reunion. **Barb (Walters) Patterson** (Sharon and Gayle's Aunt)

I'LL BE GIVING AN OVERVIEW of the Wisconsin branch of the family. This will be a time to share stories and memories and make connections. We'll explore our shared history and get some background on



Fortunately, we'll meet in warm weather. Alvina and John Vahsholtz are climbing that snowdrift behind the stone house in Cedarburg, about 100 years ago. Those are the tops of apple trees peeking out above the drift!

places the Reunion Group will visit, such as the stone house built by my great-great-grandparents, Heinrich "August" and Augusta Vahsholtz, on the family homestead in Cedarburg, Wisconsin. **Zach Domach**

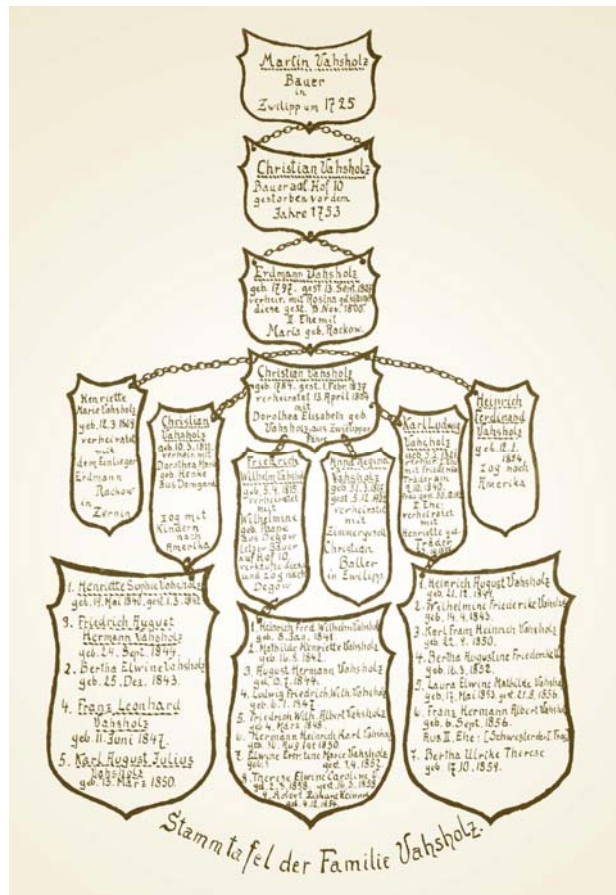
HELLO, JUST A REMINDER to please book your reservation at The Radisson Hotel before June 12. Please find the phone numbers listed below. Reunion dates are July 12 to 15, and you're welcome to stay longer! Guests are welcome to call Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West and book their reservation at 414-257-3400, or call Radisson Worldwide Reservations line 1-800-333-3333. Please Advise the reservationist to use the name "Vahsholtz Family Reunion" to ensure the special group rate. The hotel address is 2203 North Mayfair Road in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin.

To reserve on line:

1. Go to Radisson.com
2. City: type in "Milwaukee, WI"
3. Select your personal dates for your stay
4. Type in Number of "Rooms," "Adults," "Children"
5. Select Rate Type: "Promotional Code"
6. Enter Code "VFRB" ("Vahsholtz Family Reunion" if phoning)
7. Check "Radisson" circle
8. Select "Go"
9. "Radisson Hotel Milwaukee West" pops up
10. Select "Book Now" @ \$105.00 rate
11. Select "Continue" to complete registration

Note: Hotel Cancellation Policy: Call hotel directly by 6 pm

Below is the famous Vahsholtz Stammtafel, and Zach will show how the Wisconsin family relates to the rest of us. Enlarged copies will be available at the reunion.



Below is our host Hotel, near the Milwaukee Zoo with many choices for dining and shopping.



DAY BEFORE.

The cost of the Room is \$105 per night, plus a 15.01% room tax, plus State and Occupancy tax that will also be added. If you book online you will get that information. If you phone in the reservations please make sure and ask the total tax amount that you will be charged at the special \$105 discounted rate.

Please reach out to me if you have any additional questions or need assistance. We are looking forward to this gathering. **Gayle (Walters) Longley** 262-844-6439

GREETINGS TO ALL OUR FAMILY. We have set Friday, July 13th for our 1 1/2 hour Edelweiss boat cruise. Besides a history lesson on Milwaukee, our boat takes us into lake Michigan. If you have never seen a Great Lake, it will be amazing. I have lived around it all my life and it is still awesome to me! The charge for the cruise is \$20.10 each. Be sure to fill out the attached application form and enclose your check no later than May 1, 2018! Send it to me at the address on the form, whether taking the cruise or not, for planning purposes.

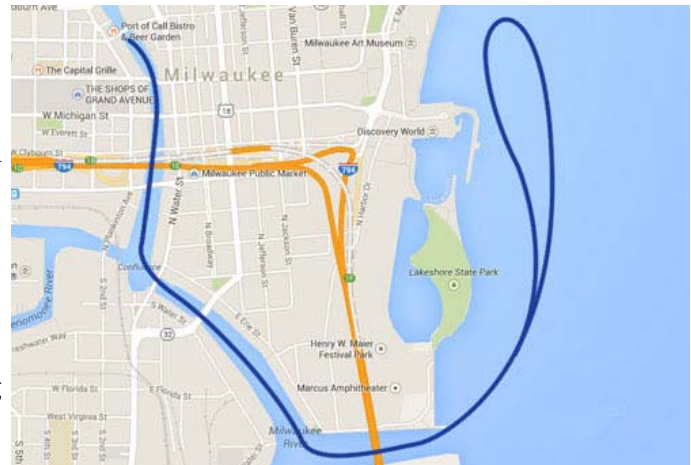
After the cruise, we'll go out for a Wisconsin fish fry to a casual dining spot where alternate choices of food are also available.

Another tour planned is the Sprecher Brewery. They not only make beer, but also soda. Any age can go on the tour. The only thing they suggested was that people be able to stand for 30 minutes. These tours are not long and could be done with alternating groups while seeing the Vahsholtz stone house in Cedarburg on Saturday.

We'll have maps and literature for more places you might like to visit on your own. The hotel location has wonderful access for getting to and from many interesting places.

Lloyd is still recovering from his stroke. His doctor said his recovery could take up to a year. Because his stroke was caused by an aneurysm rather than a blockage, he has no speech problem or weakness on either side of his body and will be able to lead the Sunday service. He still has some memory problems so I have to remind him to get his tasks done before he forgets what he has to do. Come to think about it, I have to do that for myself, too!

Lloyd went through several months of therapies. We've had several other setbacks these past five months. Two pipes burst and flooded his mother's whole house. She was not living there at the time because we had moved her over to live in the other half of our duplex. The house has to be completely renovated including new kitchen cupboards, flooring, carpeting, drywall, and painting. I was given the task of helping choose everything. Two weeks after this happened, January 18, 2018, Lloyd's mother died. We have been working through all that, too. **Sharon Powless** ■



The Edelweiss river cruise will take us on a tour something like that shown on this map, down the river through the city and out for a loop on the lake.



The number of people who sign up will determine which of their boats we'll be on, but they're all great!

A Visit to the Past

by Royce Caldron

HI BOB: We were in the Kansas City area recently for a wedding of one of Kathy's sisters so I did a little grave looking. Some of my Caldron kin are buried in that area and I found a grave that I hadn't located before.

On the way home we stopped in the Emporia/Olpe area to visit Evergreen Cemetery south of Emporia and paid respects to your parents, Fred and Merle, whose graves I'd not seen when in that cemetery visiting other Vahsholtz graves.

Then we again found Zion Lutheran Cemetery southwest of Olpe where Matie Droege, my great grandmother, is buried. I also found the location where my grandmother (Meta) was born and received permission to go on the land to view the house again. It had been over 20 years since I was last there. As expected, the house has deteriorated greatly with the passage of time with trees and weeds grown up all around. Also the wooden "addition" to the back has completely fallen in.

A couple of questions. Since this is where my grandmother was born, I wondered if Fred was also born there a few years later? Any idea how long the family lived there before moving to Clay County? I talked to Diane Ballenger (she and husband own the place), who said she recognized the Vahsholtz name. She is a niece to John Finney, the previous owner, and lives in a house next door to the entrance. She was hesitant to give me permission to go on the property noting that after driving over the second cattle guard, there were horses running loose and they might bite us. I assured her I was a true "city slicker" and that I would not let the horses get close enough to bite!

One "improvement" I noted was that the area roads now have designated names. For instance Zion Lutheran Cemetery is on Road G, and this property on Road H, making it easier to locate places.



HEY ROYCE, I'm so glad you got back into the old place and took those photos! Yes, my dad was also born there in 1910 and so was Hilda (Vahsholtz Brier, 1912). Leonard was born at Clay Center, in 1914 when my dad would have been about four years old. My dad graduated from high

school in Clay Center and it was about that time his parents' return to the Olpe farm took place—around 1927. I think Herman moved to Olpe from Lincoln, Kansas, but I don't know just when. He would likely have been attracted to the area by the many V relatives as well as his wife's Droege family right next door.

I don't know when the wooden kitchen and bedroom were put on. The room on the right as viewed from the front was the “family room” which was where everything happened. The room on the left was the parlor where nothing happened—reserved, I guess, for guests the likes of whom rarely appeared. That's where the phonograph I craved was located as well as some other “nice” furniture. I remember some big crowds at Grandpa's, spilling over into the kitchen, porch and yard, but never into the parlor. The stairway was between, leading to the two upstairs bedrooms.

At some point, perhaps while the Vs were away at Clay Center, an “oilfield house”—really a shack of about 20 x 30 dimensions—was moved in just south of the kitchen (never used and falling down in my memory) and just beyond that, the outhouse. The barn was a couple of hundred feet downhill from the front of the house and Grandpa's tumble-down blacksmith shop was off to the right of it.

I barely remember John Finney. He lived there for a long time having bought the V place, as best I can remember, shortly after my Grandpa Herman Vahsholtz died in 1946.

All your descriptions ring true. I hope when taking photos from the North side you avoided the well that's out there. There were two wells on the place, one on the south side for drinking water and the one on the north side for storing butter, which was lowered on a rope to be kept cool.

As you saw, those stone walls are thick and I recall Grandma V. put her Christmas tree on the sill of the window to the right of the front door. The opening on the south side was the door to the basement and home-canned food was stored down there. Also the cream separator was there and brother Dick and I sometimes got the job of separating the little dab of milk from their one cow.

Grandpa's shop was always fun. There was a



Looking through the parlor window, the parlor floor is gone. The front entry is to the right and you can see the right side of the staircase and pieces of the stair in the basement. The floor of the family room is on the far side.

big amber jar on a shelf and we were told to not touch that. Deadly poison. Sometimes if Grandpa had a project, we'd pump the forge. I have his bench vise and his anvil on its walnut stump. Out in the barn was a hand operated corn sheller and a fascinating machine that was some sort of hand operated separator—wheat from chaff or the like.

In my memory, Grandpa was always poorly—didn't even have a tractor. My dad did his very limited amount of farming. We'd always plant a row of potatoes out behind the barn, and that was their main source of food. They had no source of income I can think of, yet Grandpa managed to maintain his supply of patent medicine. Occasionally we'd get to ride along when he'd crank his old Model A (twisting wires together in lieu of ignition switch) and off we'd go to Madison for medicine and maybe a loaf of bread.

There was a junk Model A Ford truck that always sat in the weeds between the house and barn.



Looking in the front door to the right is the area you described as the family room. You can still see some of the flooring there, but I don't think I would want to try walking on it!

Below, looking from the family room through the parlor.



One day, my dad needed a truck for something, went over there with a can of gas, a tire pump and some wrenches and shortly got it running and drove it home.

Memories. Gotta love 'em.

BOB: It was interesting to read your memories of the old V house! I especially liked your comment about the old phonograph you craved being located in the parlor.

I am sending three additional pictures I took on this trip that go along with your description of the inside of the house. One is looking in the front door to the right (which would be the area you described as the family room). You can still see some of the flooring there, but I don't think I would want to try walking on it!

Another picture is looking from the front door more to the center and left of the inside. You can see the floor has given way (this would be where the parlor would have been as well as the stairs). The third picture is looking into the house from a window on the north side of the house. You can see down inside the basement where the first floor has collapsed as well as the area on the south side that would be the family room.

One of my girls remembers going there one time and her most vivid recollection was that there was a dead cow in the basement! Royce ■

Letter

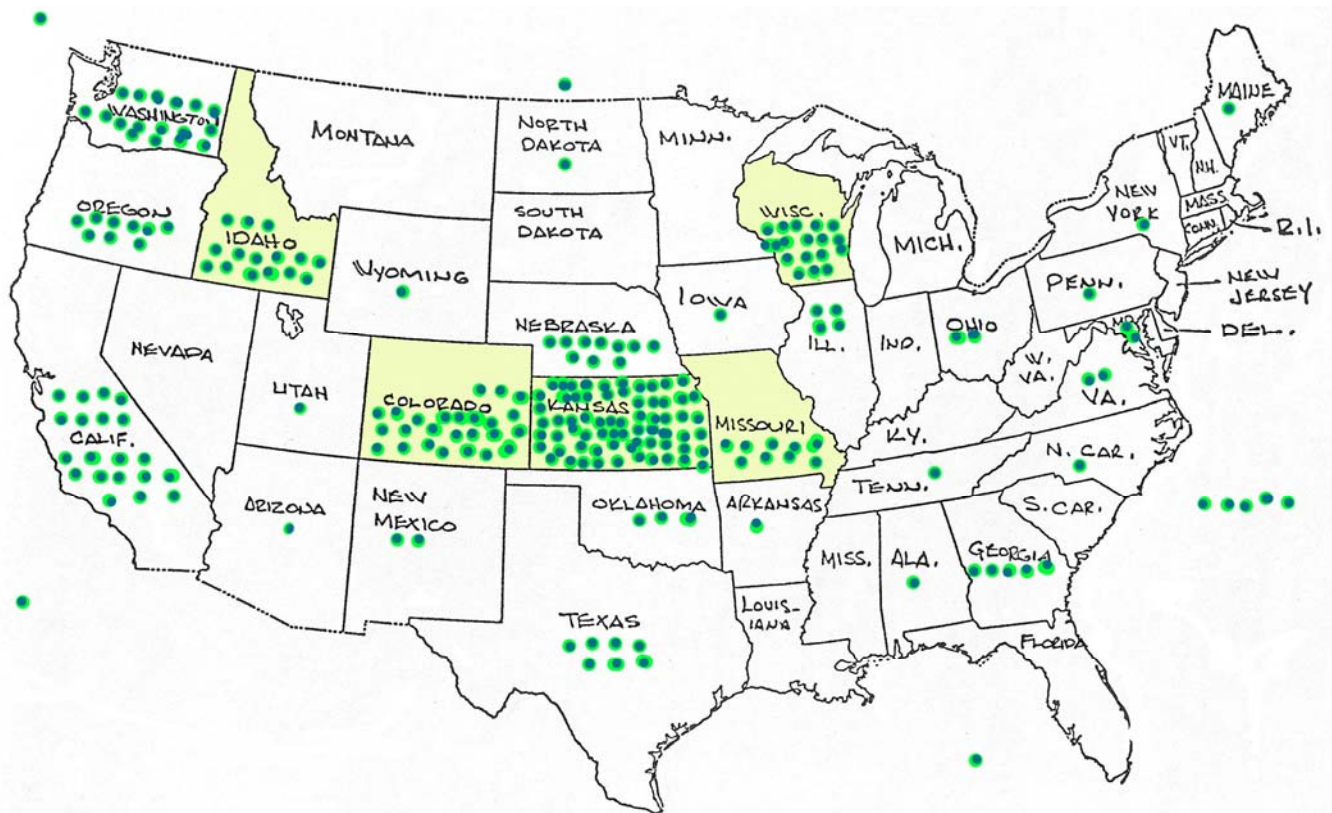
HI MARGE & BOB, Thanks for all the work you put into making and sending out the newsletter for the Vahsholtz Cousins. It's interesting to read about relatives that I don't know and most likely never will. There are a lot of diverse stories and people. Enjoyed reading the story from my cousin Geraldine (Geri). That was a good way for her to use the unexpected inheritance from her parents. I'm sure they all had a good lunch and a nice visit. I didn't get to visit in Kansas this past year, but hope to next year. Don't get to visit my family as much as I'd like. I am still working part time and am living in an apartment building on the first floor. I live in Enola, which is a small town right across the river from Harrisburg, PA. I'm happy to say I'm doing very well.

Well, that's about all for now. Just wanted to drop you a few lines and wish you well and good luck in finding someone to take over the writing and editing job for the newsletter. Take care, and best wishes.

Arlene (Rathke) Young

My How The Tribe Has Scattered!

THIS MAP SHOWS DOTS FOR ABOUT 225 VAHSHOLTZ FAMILIES who get this newsletter (there are more, but in several cases, we have just email addresses with no location identified). Note that a few are outside the 48 states.



The shaded states are those that have hosted Vahsholtz Cousins Reunions. These get-togethers started in Kansas back when the majority of us lived there. That area still dominates but fewer than a third of us continue to be Kansans.

As the Kansas clan dispersed, reunions have been held in Missouri, then Colorado, Idaho and now Wisconsin. The dots on the map show why it was agreed to reach out to other locations.

Where to next? The 2020 location of the Reunion will be a prime topic for discussion in Wisconsin. A good argument can be made for a return to Kansas (it's been quite a few years). Nebraska looks like a good choice. Venturing afield to California? Maybe, but the V's out there are widely scattered.

There's more to the question than geography. As previous hosts will attest, putting together one of these events can be a lot of fun, but also requires planning, work and dedication. So finding a willing family or families to host a reunion can be a challenge.

If you'd consider hosting please let us know, and join us for the business meeting in Wisconsin this summer, if possible. It promises to be a lively discussion. ■

Time for Changes

DO YOU RECALL OUR EDITORIAL in the November issue noting it's time for us to retire? No volunteers have stepped forward.

Nonetheless, we're serious. We're getting old, tired, and have done our time. Recruiting capable and willing volunteers is hard—but we can no longer keep up the pace.

As my dad used to say, here's the whole thing in a nutshell: Pareto's Law is a truism saying 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work. And when our tribe is scattered to the winds, we can't even know who those 20 percent are! We think they're out there, but we can't find them.

Us V's (and F's!) are a hard working German clan, and though we love family, we're all busy and the days of gathering for Sunday dinner are gone. Now the Vahsholtz Tribe gathers just every two years—and most of us don't show up. We have a newsletter but it's only twice yearly and few contribute. We have a website that seems little used. Not a great recipe for family togetherness, but what more can we do?

Here's a message from Greg Vahsholtz, suggesting we may be up against a brick wall.

Many people in the family do not have the passion or patience that the two of you have for this venture. I believe the future of the reunion is bleak at best. You are not going to get the passion you seek for newsletters, reunion volunteers, etc.; sad but true. I don't have an issue with helping carry the torch for the future but I am not sure I have the passion you are looking for. I have a ton of passion for keeping a tight family relationship with the likes of the

two of you and your clan, but I couldn't name ten "other" family members right now, outside our immediate family.

I do plan on attending the Wisconsin reunion and will help where I can. Just understand that despite Les' tremendous efforts and yours, this whole reunion thing may be fizzling out. My generation, and certainly my kids and grandkids generation, do not appreciate and pay much attention to the family tree as people used to.

Just my opinions; could be wrong; hope I am. I will do what I can.

Greg

Greg was responding to our request for help recruiting volunteers, but he understands and shares our problem. What, exactly, can we really do? What strings are to be pulled? There's not a great amount of work to be done, but it really should be shared. The plan Les helped us put together some years ago is not working—and Marge and I are carrying too much of the load.

One thing seems certain. The Wisconsin Vahsholtz clan has the bit in their teeth and is planning a great reunion. At that reunion, we've asked Greg to lead a discussion on the future of this long tradition of Vahsholtz Cousins Reunions. Maybe we're facing the end of the great effort launched by previous generations? Maybe it's time to go out with a bang in Wisconsin? Maybe the best we can hope for is keeping in touch with immediate family through regional reunions?

Will you come and join the discussion in Wisconsin? Help us find a way forward? Or if we must, help us decide the game is up.

Your editors, Bob & Marge Vahsholtz

Vahsholtz Cousins is published twice yearly, spring and fall. Copies go out to some 255 Vahsholtz families. It is supported entirely by donations. Those who supply email addresses get full color copies attached to an email as a PDF file, which they can read on screen or print as they wish. Those having no email address get a black and white edition mailed to their last known address. "Snail mail" is the biggest cost item of the whole Vahsholtz publication enterprise, due to costs of printing and stamps. Your donations are appreciated. **What will help most is any additions or corrections you can make to our email list. Each mailing we send out, we get some email bounces or returned mail from those who have moved, passed on, or changed their address. Please let Marge know! mvahsholtz@gmail.com**

If you'd like to make a donation, contact Treasurer Tony Vahsholtz avahsholtz@gmail.com or mail to: 12419 S. Downing Way, Nampa, Idaho 83686.

DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: October 15, 2018 ■

Registration 2018 Vahsholtz Cousins Reunion

This information is for our records and may help with genealogy and newsletter records

Please Print Clearly!

Vahsholtz Cousin Name _____

Address _____

Email addresses _____

Telephone _____

Cell _____

Your Vahsholtz Ancestor?

Parents; Grandparents _____

Others in your party:

Spouse _____

Address _____

Email addresses _____

Telephone _____

Cell _____

Other (relationship) _____

Address _____

Email addresses _____

Telephone _____

Cell _____

Other (relationship) _____

Address _____

Email addresses _____

Telephone _____

Cell _____

Number on the July 13 River Cruise _____ **x \$20.10 each =** _____ **Amount enclosed**

Please use the back of this page if needed. Send by May 1, 2018 to: Sharon Powless, 1430 Acorn Drive, Green Bay, Wisconsin 54304 sharon_powless@yahoo.com 920-494-3244 or 920-713-8405