



Vahsholtz Cousins

Winter 2009 Vol. 2 No. 2

<http://www.vahsholtz-cousins.org>

2008 Reunion

Cousins, cobbler and camaraderie in Branson



Cousins, from left, Fred Fahsholtz, Marla Beth Simmons, Della Elizabeth Karlik, T.J. Simmons, Les Vahsholtz, Della Fahsholtz, Carole Vahsholtz, Sophie Vahsholtz and Tim Vahsholtz were among those gathering in Branson.

By Geri Tate

The 2008 Vahsholtz-Cousin Reunion was held this year in Branson, Missouri, on the weekend of July 25-27, 2008. Our meeting place was at the Savannah House Hotel.

The Savannah House accommo-

dations were awesome! A delicious complementary hot breakfast was enjoyed by all every morning in a spacious breakfast room that was given to us "free of charge" for our 2008 Reunion Meeting. Throughout the day, we had a beautiful lounge area

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Allan Brockmeier, Ray and Carol Sinclair and Geri Tate on the deck of the Branson Belle Showboat.



Shirley and Vic Hippe enjoy lunch and a visit with Martha Brockmeier.

Your financial support is greatly appreciated

Mail all donations to

Allan Brockmeier-treasurer
11764 Kingston Drive
Festus MO 63028-3901

Your current Vahsholtz-Cousins Reunion volunteers are doing an awesome job producing professional full color newsletters and maintaining a family Web site. Although it is a labor of love, it is not without cost. All volunteers are donating time and materials.

If you enjoy receiving these newsletters and our bi-yearly reunions, please lend your support with a donation. (If the donation is by personal check, please make the check payable to Allan.)

Reunion:

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for visiting and getting acquainted with new family members. The pleasant atmosphere, extended time to visit and the availability of fun things to do together in Branson was a huge plus for this reunion. It was voted to "Do It Again in 2010." That would be to plan the Vahsholtz-Cousin Reunion in Branson, Mo at the Savannah House Hotel. The tentative date considered is June 25, 2010.

Reunion Meeting

Friday evening was check-in time and the rest of the evening was spent visiting. After breakfast on Saturday morning, we had a short business meeting conducted by Les Vahsholtz. He presented a slide presentation describing the Vahsholtz-Cousin website, the e-mail communication and introduced the volunteers who made the 2008 Reunion possible.

The Zwillipp book genealogy updates (prepared by Marge Vahsholtz) were handed out to those attending the reunion.

The reunion budget was presented showing the cost of the newsletters and postage for the past two years between \$250 to \$300. Everyone agreed that the newsletter, e-mail and website help to hold the family together and connect new found relatives. However, it is not without cost. Our volunteers are donating their time, and in many cases, material.

In past years, money was collected in advance for a reunion meal and those who prepaid and did not attend left money in our treasury. With our new format everyone is responsible for their own meals and prepaid money is not necessary. Our treasury is low at this time and it was discussed and approved that we will ask for donations in our newsletters, e-mails and on the website. It is our

Find more photos and reunion fun
online at
www.vahsholtz-cousins.org



A group of 19 cousins boarded the Branson Belle Showboat. From left, Jim Tate, Geri Tate, Shirley Hippe, Vic Hippe, Kristin Scott, Daniel Scott, Robert Scott, Robert's grandmother, Lloyd Powless, Robby Scott, Alex Powless, Stacy Brockmeier, Laura Scott, Sharon Powless, Ray Sinclair, Carol Sinclair, Peggy Scott, Allan Brockmeier, Martha Brockmeier



Fred and Della Fahsholtz, Geri Tate and T. J. Simmons consult the book for the answer to a family history question.

hope that those who can, will help support our newsletter and website thus keeping our family in touch across the nation and the world. Donation details are posted on Page 1.

Family Recreation

After the meeting, nineteen traveled to meet the Branson Belle Showboat for a dinner and show. A group picture was taken. Some went to see the show "Legends" and then ate at the Farm House Family Café in Old Branson. Others visited the Titanic Museum where our young J.T. Simmons was chosen to be Captain Smith for the day. They ate at Sadie's Barbeque.

In the evening, several went to the Presley Family Show, while others stayed at the hotel to visit.

This is a plus for staying at one hotel. We always topped off each evening with the complementary



Les Vahsholtz and the Blues Brothers at the Legends in Concert show.

peach and raspberry cobbler, ice cream and fresh cookies at the Savannah House. And more visiting was done before bedtime.

On Sunday, after breakfast and more visiting, some went to a church service, swimming in the hotel pool, shopping, more shows and visiting...

Attendance

There was a total of 27 cousins in attendance.

The three families that traveled the farthest were:

Victor and Shirley Hippe, Tacoma, Washington

Lloyd and Sharon Powless, Green Bay, Wisconsin and grandson, Alex Powless.

Fred and Della Fahsholtz, Clovis, New Mexico, their daughter, Marla Beth Fahsholtz Simmons and grandchildren, Della Elizabeth Karlik and T.J. Simmons.

Who are we?

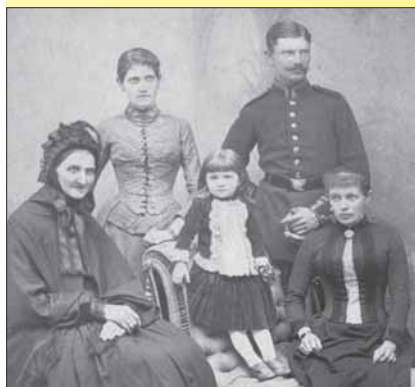
Building the family history takes time

By Bob and Marge Vahsholtz

Visitors to the Lebold-Vahsholtz Mansion in Abilene used to come back again and again, mainly to listen to Merle's abundant supply of tales. Marge sometimes tagged along and enjoyed the stories too. One day after a tour was finished, Marge (a stickler for detail) said, "Mom, I was listening in today, and I don't want to be critical, but I noticed a couple of things you said that are not really true."

Patting her hand, Merle said, "Marge, we're not in the history business. We're in the *entertainment* business."

In the Vahsholtz book, we tried to keep Merle's wisdom in mind so that people would enjoy reading the family history. We also tried to get the facts straight. Both were challenging tasks, and we're still working on



This photo, on page 26 of the book may show William Vahsholtz and his family.



Sophie and Christian Daniel Vahsholtz (1811).

them. Important details continue to turn up.

A very important document in the Vahsholtz book is the Stammtafel der Familie Vahsholtz, prepared by Asmus, the Zwilipp teacher, in appreciation for gifts sent over by the American families. This nicely hand-drawn and lettered document is probably our best written record of our German heritage.

Maybe it's incomplete. Consider a couple of points from the book.

The Stammtafel (see page 24, *The Road from Zwilipp*) lists five offspring from Christian (1811); Henriette Sophie (1840), Bertha Elwine (1843), Friedrich August Hermann "Herman" (1844), Franz Leonhard (1847) and Karl August Julius (1850). Also listed in the book is an older brother, August Henry (1838), a forest ranger who died in the line of duty, who Asmus either didn't know about or chose not to list on the Stammtafel. The Hitzeman's told us about this first son, and his existence has been confirmed by other research.

Alfred Vahsholtz's album provided a photo (page 26 of the book) showing William Vahsholtz with his family, and the caption on the back says this uniformed man died in the forest service under circumstances remarkably like those attributed to August Henry. Duane Vahsholtz supplied the other picture on the same page showing what may be the same fellow, saying he was born in 1842, but the uniform looks like it may be wrong for the "forest ranger" era. Exactly who's who here? We may never know, but we keep trying.

Such details cast a bit of doubt on the credence of Mr. Asmus and his nifty family tree. Further, about five years ago we made contact with

Martina Riesener from Germany who is apparently a descendant of a first-born daughter of Christian (1811) who married there and did not emigrate. None of us here seems to have heard of this child, Friederike Wilhelmine Caroline Vahsholtz (1835). Martina found her ancestor's baptismal certificate showing "Father; Christian Vasholz from Zwilipp and mother: Sophia nee Henke". She also found a marriage certificate for "Friederike Karoline Vassholz daughter of Christian Vassholz".

We show Christian and Sophia married in 1837, two years after Martina's ancestor was born. Births outside wedlock happened back then of course, but it also may be that Melvina got the 1837 marriage date wrong. In a letter to Marge, she said, "I did look in all the records but ... I [may] have made a mistake. It was probably 1832 instead of 1837." Hand-written 2's and 7's can look much alike.

In trying to sort this out, Martina asked us for an enhanced copy of Christian's passport that appears on page 14 of the book. We sent it to her and she noted that the Hitzeman translation of Sophie's name is incorrect; a mistake that became obvious once pointed out. Our book shows her first name as "Dorothea" but the document says "Catharina." Perhaps the passport is in error? Her tombstone only says "Sophie," and we have no other records. Can anyone help?

So why did Asmus fail to tell the American family about August and Martina's ancestor who stayed behind? We don't know. Perhaps he thought we'd only be interested in those who crossed the water, but then why include the child who died there? Maybe he also had difficulty finding documentation.

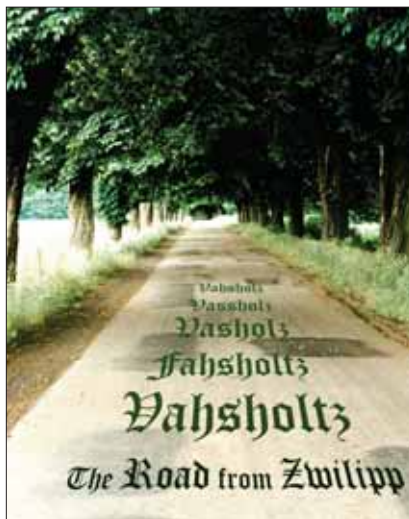
So far, Martina has translated and sent us about 25 pages of Asmus' German church papers, and has more. We seek more confirmation before changing our records and updating to the book. We ask for help from anyone who may be able to shed some light on this and other continuing mysteries. The quest is fun and the resulting family history is a growing testament to the ancestors of whom we're all proud.

How we found Martin Vahsholz

Martin Vahsholz came to the USA for a Vahsholtz Reunion in 1992, where he and his wife Hännchen met many of us. He also wrote the story of his life for our genealogy book "The Road From Zwillipp". The photo on the cover was taken by Duane Vahsholtz (at right) when he and his wife Joanne made a trip to Zwillipp with Martin in 1995. Joanne has now written how the connection was first established.

By Joanne Vahsholtz

In July 1987, we met the Haase family from Lübeck, Germany, in a small hotel dining room in Chartres, France. In a conversation exchange, Duane learned that Karin Haase had lived in Pomerania before and during World War II. Duane had learned from the Hitzeman history of the Vahsholtz family that the Vahsholtz ancestors who had come to America in the late 19th century had come from a village named Zwillipp in Pomerania. At the end of the war in 1945, this section of Germany had been given to Poland by the "powers that be" and this had forced a mass migration of several million Germans from Pomerania to points west – mainly West Germany. Karin, then 5, her sister, then 2, and their mother made their way to Lübeck, a town near Travemünde in the Baltic Sea. Karin suggested to us that she might be able to learn if we had any Vahsholtz relatives in Germany. We exchanged ad-



This cover photo was taken by Duane Vahsholtz during his visit to Zwillipp.

dresses and parted ways.

Fast forward to 1990 when we found we were able to make a second trip to Europe. Duane wrote to Karin Haase, kindly requesting her to do what she could to learn if indeed we had relatives in Germany. She went to a newspaper office in Travemünde where she knew people having left Pomerania had a way of keeping in touch with one another. Asking to see the subscription list, she found four Vahsholz names and wrote to them. One responded – Martin Vahsholz from Remagen, a city on the Rhine River. He telephoned Karin excitedly asking her to tell him what she knew about "those people from America".

He wrote to us. We answered and

so it was that we met June 24, 1990, on a Sunday afternoon in the little town of Bad Vilbel outside of Frankfurt, 130 years after Christian Vahsholz had left Germany for America.

At that time, we met Martin, his wife, Hännchen, and daughter, Barbara Dondelinger. Since we had planned a car trip up the Rhine, they invited us to their home in Remagen. And so we met them there on Tuesday and met their son, Wolfgang, and cousin Peter and his wife, Agnes. We shared a meal in their backyard and learned much about their lives during and after the war. Martin's family had also been forced to leave their farm in Zwillipp and make their way to West Germany in 1945 and start a whole new life. Martin was 15 at that time. It was also at this time that Martin shared his copy of the family tree, and we were able to find our common ancestors.

In 1995 on another trip, Martin took us to Poland to visit the village of Zwillipp and actually see his former home. Yes, it was all quite an unbelievable story!



Stay in touch

Your reunion newsletter committee would like to hear from YOU!

Please share stories or ideas for stories from your family through the Vahsholtz Cousins Web site, www.vahsholtz-cousins.org

or mail us at

**Allan Brockmeier
11764 Kingston Dr.
Festus, MO 63028**

Hope to see you cruisin' to the 2010 reunion



Kristin and Laura Scott were delighted to see the Branson sites in style with Les and Carole Vahsholtz. Join us in two years for more family fun!