



Westphalia Historical Society

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Sad Note To Start

It is with sadness that we report the passing of Sheila Pohl, wife of Allan Pohl. Allan is the son of Elvan and Mary Ellen Pohl. In 1992, Allan and Sheila completed the Pohl family tree; they started with Johann Peter Pohl and his wife Maria Catharina Hellenthal. Johann and his family emigrated to America in 1841 aboard the ship *Louis Phillipe* - those who have attended our cemetery walks would recognize the name of this popular ship that many of our ancestors arrived on. The Pohl family tree book contains over 200 pages of information. It was truly a work of intense dedication which many future generations can enjoy and learn from.

2019 Museum

This coming spring we will feature wedding dresses and attire pre 1950. We will also feature wedding pictures and other wedding items. Margie Wirth and Carol Simon are coordinating this display.

This Saturday (2/9) is a photo scan clinic. See our **Blog page** or **Facebook page** for information.

If you have any questions, Margie can be reached at 989-587-6984.

Knoop Travel Bag

Some time ago we received the donation gift of a travel bag (suitcase) from the Albert Knoop family. The travel bag itself is about the same size as a present day carry-on suitcase, but it was used by Heinrich (Henry) Knoop to emigrate to the US from Germany. It is hard to believe that one could carry all their belongings and emigrate with such a small container (although it is worth noting that some immigrants would layer their clothing so they could bring more with them).

Compulsory military service was the law in Prussia, Germany. All men, when reaching their 20th birthday, were liable for 19 years of service - three years in the standing army, two years in the active reserves, seven years in the first levy of the Landwehr (field army in wartime), seven additional years in the second levy of the Landwehr (performed duties of home defense in wartime). For this reason, most men were 40 years or older when they emigrated here.

In the case of Heinrich Knoop, who was born in 1857, he was able to get out of this service early by getting a passport, which was rare. He had served three years in the army and did not like it, and with the help of a fellow soldier whose father was an attorney, he was able to get a passport. He came to America in October 1885. When it was discovered that he had left the country to avoid further military service, he received notice that if he did not return and was caught, he would be hanged. His reply was simple: "Send me the rope."

He went first to Westphalia, Iowa on advice from family members. It was there that he met Josephine Schneider, daughter of Casper Schneider (the Schneiders had also emigrated from Germany). Later, she and her family moved to Westphalia, Michigan, as did Heinrich. It was here that he married Josephine Schneider in June of 1887. Family legend has it that Heinrich and the Schneider family did not like the severe weather and tornadoes in Iowa.

The suitcase will be on display this year in the museum.



HERE'S A FLASHBACK FROM SIX YEARS AGO, FEBRUARY 2013, VOLUME 5

WHEN WE FEATURED TWO SONGS ABOUT WESTPHALIA

Local Song Writers

The next time you run into Bernadette Thelen ask her to sing you a little ditty she and some other young 12-14 year old girls wrote in about 1937 when they used to play by "Platte Bach" (Platte Creek that flows through the park).

*Oh! Beautiful, beautiful Westphalia
The most beautiful place that I know
You may live on a farm, on a highway, or down where the Platte Bach flows,
But you're still in dear old Westphalia
The most beautiful place that I know.*

A second song about Westphalia was written and is often sung by local singer and song writer, Dan Pung. Many heard him sing it in the park last summer at the town picnic when our German visitors were here. You also might have heard it at one of his barn dances or perhaps during the "Century dinner". His words really hit home about our Westphalia.

Westphalia Song

I've lived in the city where there's millions of folks,
But so many seem lonesome and blue.
I guess you don't need more people to feel less alone
In Westphalia, Michigan.

And I've been to a place where they make wine out of
rice,
And they sit on the floor with no shoes.
But just give me a cider, and a chair would be nice
In Westphalia, Michigan.

'Cuz in Westphalia, the people have style,
And in Westphalia there's more deer camps per mile,
And I'll tell ya, I've been no place where I have not
come back
To Westphalia, Michigan

I've traveled to Greece where great philosophers
wrote,
And man they sure had a beautiful view.
But you don't need to worry if you fumble the soap
In Westphalia, Michigan.

And I visited Venice to watch the gondola boats,
They say it's romantic to do.
But I saw no more amore than there is on Jones Road
In Westphalia, Michigan.

'Cuz in Westphalia, the people are proud,
And in Westphalia, there's no mailbox allowed,
And I'll tell ya, I've been no place where I have not
come back
To Westphalia, Michigan.

I've seen St. Paul's in London, St. Peter's in Rome, And
Notre Dame to name a few.
But there's no church more pretty than the one here
at home
In Westphalia, Michigan.

Now there's one place I have not seen, and I hope to
some day,
It's where family and friends have gone to.
And I'll find all that I need to show me the way
In Westphalia, Michigan.

'Cuz in Westphalia, the people are kind,
They have a destination in mind,
And until I get to Heaven, you know you can find me
In Westphalia, Michigan...

And I'll bet ya that Heaven's a little bit like
Westphalia, Michigan.