



**OCTOBER 5, 2004**

**THE  
VAN SCHAICK  
FAMILY CEMETERY  
1811-1868**

**SHARON HILL, TOWN OF  
SHARON, SCHOHARIE COUNTY,  
NEW YORK**



**OCTOBER 14, 2004**

# **THE VAN SCHAICK CEMETERY**

**(by Vicki Van Schaick Weinman)**

## **1. Discovery**

For years our family had been searching unsuccessfully for the grave of Koert Van Schaick. Koert is very important to our family. Koert was born on June 25, 1757 in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Koert was a Revolutionary War soldier and Patriot in Monmouth County. After the Revolutionary War, he was the first Van Schaick to emigrate to Sharon, Schoharie County where he founded the Schoharie County branch of our family, purchasing a farm in 1796 and marrying Margaret Wilson in 1800. Koert died in Sharon at 68 years old on May 5, 1826.

In researching our family history, information that I had from two sources indicated that Koert was buried on the Family Farm. Our family (descendents of Leffert Van Schaick) had searched what we had always referred to as the Family Farm on Engleville Road in Sharon which had been in the Van Schaick family for several generations until the death of my great-grandfather, Leon Van Schaick, in 1956.

After a submission to "The Van Schaick Kinsfolk Quarterly" I was contacted by Harriett Collins Geywits. Koert and his wife, Margaret Wilson, had nine children, including Leffert. Harriett and I are both descendants of Leffert Van Schaick. Leffert had ten children, including Alonzo and Jay W. Jay W. is Harriett's great-grandfather, while I am descended from Leffert's son, Alonzo. Harriett and I had grown up in Sharon, and while many of our families were acquainted, Harriett and I had never met.

Happily, Harriett had been doing research on the history of the Van Schaicks, especially the Sharon branch of the family. At the Old Stone Fort in Schoharie, Harriett had found a visual survey of Schoharie County Cemeteries. In this survey, she had discovered a Van Schaick cemetery listed which contained 5 graves. She sent me the entry, which follows:

### **Town of Sharon – Sharon Hill**

**South off Slate Hill Road**

**Down long farm lane, back of bee hives, locust grove – one very large locust**

- 1. Koert Van Schaick, died Nov. 30, 1863, aged 33 yrs, 11m, 13ds. My Husband**
- 2. Margaret Van Schaick, died Sept. 9, 1839, aged 36 yrs, 5m, 25 days**
- 3. Koert Van Schaick, died May 5, 1826, aged 68 yrs, 10m, 9ds**
- 4. Sarah, daughter of J. W. and E. Van Schaick, died April 5, 1868, 21yrs, 11m, 18d**
- 5. Jonathan Hutton, died April 3, 1864, aged 34 yrs, 4 m, and 2ds**

Harriett had also discovered an 1866 map of the Sharon Hill area that showed houses and who owned them. On this map she found a house owned by J.W. (Joseph Wilson) Van Schaick, Koert's son. This house was **down a long farm lane on the south side of Slate Hill Road!!!** That's right! We had been looking on the wrong family farm! This map also shows the farm owned by Leffert G. Van Schaick on Engleville Road in Engleville, Town of Sharon – what my immediate family had always referred to as the Family Farm.

On Sunday afternoon, July 18, 2004, LeRoy Van Schaick, his daughter, Vicki Weinman (me!), and her husband Paul Weinman met Harriett Collins Geywits at the corner of Route 20 and Slate Hill Road to do some hunting - grave hunting, to be specific!

The four of us went to the farmhouse on the farm where it looked like Joseph Wilson Van Schaick's farm had been and asked the current owner about it. The original barn and house that were down the long farm lane are no longer there. The farm house is now on the north side of Slate Hill Road. One of the current owners said that she had been told that there were old graves on the property, but that she didn't know where they were and had never seen them. We told her what we knew about the cemetery's location. She said that there were beehives, gave us directions to them, and graciously gave us permission to search on their property. It is a very large farm, and there were groves of locust trees all around. I was not feeling confident of success as we drove down the farm lane and saw how large the farm was and how many places seemed to match the description. We drove over half a mile, parked by a cornfield, walked past the beehives, through brush and brambles and into a wooded area. We saw a locust grove which contained a very large locust and, headed toward it. **There at the base of the large locust was one gravestone standing!!** We couldn't believe it. We all had goose bumps! - Thank you, Harriett!!!

This farm on Slate Hill Road in Sharon Hill, Town of Sharon, was purchased by Koert Van Schaick in 1796. He married Margaret Wilson in 1800 and they raised their family on this farm. After his death, his son Joseph Wilson Van Schaick took over the operation of this farm. It was subsequently operated by Joseph's daughter, Catherine. The Van Schaick Family Cemetery on this farm is the resting place of some of the members of three generations of Van Schaicks: Koert, some of his children, and some of his grandchildren.



We parked by the cornfield, going past the old trailer on the right and the beehives on the left just before reaching the woods. (7/18/2004)



Vicki and Harriet leaving the clearing and entering the woods through the undergrowth! (7/18/2004)



Our first sight of the cemetery. (7/18/2004)

Note the one standing gravestone just to the left of the large locust tree. Four other headstones were lying down, partially covered by dirt and leaves.

## **2. What we found**

The visual survey from the Old Stone Fort listed five people buried in this cemetery. Only one of the gravestones was standing, three were lying on the ground, face up, partially covered with dirt, leaves, and debris but remarkably undamaged where the inscriptions were carved. They were very legible once the debris and plant growth was removed. A fifth was broken in 3 pieces that were lying on top of each other. The entire inscription was on one piece which was lying face down and covered with moss.

The gravestone of Koert Van Schaick (grandson of the original Koert Van Schaick who fought in the Revolutionary War in NJ and then moved to NY) who died in 1863 was the one that was still standing, although leaning backwards. We then found the partially covered headstones of Margaret Van Schaick, Jonathan Hutton, and Sarah Van Schaick, which were lying on the ground. Finally we turned our attention to the gravestone that was broken in three pieces and partially buried in the dirt. It was next to a very large branch or tree that had fallen, probably breaking the headstone when it fell. The piece with the inscription on it was facing down, covered with moss, and difficult to read. After gently pushing off the moss, we discovered what we were searching for: The grave of Koert Van Schaick! The inscription read, "Koert Van Schaick, died May 5, 1826, aged 68 years, 10 mos. 9 days."

While we were there, we saw what we thought was the outline of another gravestone under the ground immediately to the left of Koert's grave. We weren't very well prepared, and ended up using a jawbone of a cow that we found as a tool to dig!! We unearthed the gravestone of Koert's son, also named Koert, who died at age 3. Of the 6 people we found buried in this small family graveyard on Sunday, July 18, THREE were named Koert Van Schaick: the original Koert who moved from New Jersey (hereafter referred to as Koert Sr. or just Koert), his son Koert who died at age 3 (hereafter referred to as Koert Jr. or Baby Koert), and his grandson Koert (hereafter referred to as Grandson Koert)!

We were puzzled by the small stones that we found. They were about eight inches wide and sticking up about ten inches from the ground. Some of them had initials on them and some were blank. At first, we thought that they might be small headstones. However, after further investigation, we discerned that they were actually footstones, located 6 feet from the headstone. Some had the initials of the person indicated on the headstone, while some were blank. We also noticed that there were two rows of headstones. In the back row was Margaret Van Schaick (died 1839), Koert Jr. (died 1811), and Koert Van Schaick (died 1826). In the front row was Jonathan Hutton (died 1864), Koert Van Schaick, the grandson (died 1863), and Sarah Van Schaick (died 1868). Those in the back row were older than those in the front row. The style of headstones in the two different rows is very distinctively different.



LeRoy D. Van Schaick, Harriett Collins Geywits, and Vicki Van Schaick Weinman standing behind the piece of Koert's headstone (7/18/04) which reads:

"Koert Van Schaick  
died  
May 5, 1826  
Aged 68 years  
10 mos. 9 days"

Note the large branch or tree which the headstone is leaning against. This was just to the left of the headstone and is probably why it was broken.



Paul and LeRoy with the cow jaw that we used as a digging tool on our first trip to the cemetery on July 18, 2004!

### **3. Restoration**

The owners of the farm graciously gave us permission to return in the future to work on the cemetery. We have several specific goals that we hope to achieve in the cemetery.

1. Clean up the fallen branches and saplings, rake and clean the area, etc. Perhaps plant ferns, define the border of the cemetery and other aesthetic considerations.
2. Explore to see if any other headstones are buried under the ground.
3. Clean the headstones.
4. Set up the fallen headstones.
5. Make a record of the cemetery including rubbings of the headstones, before and after pictures, make a map of the cemetery.
6. Find information on the people buried there.
7. Document what we find and what we do. Share it with those interested.

LeRoy, Vicki and Paul returned on Tuesday, **July 20, 2004** to begin. We had a great day!

We carefully dug out and lifted the headstones of Margaret Van Schaick, Koert Van Schaick (Koert's infant son), Jonathan Hutton, and Sarah Van Schaick. We gently cleaned these four and Koert Sr.'s headstone with water and a soft nylon brush and a tooth brush. Happily, they are all marble which is more durable than limestone. They are all still legible and the water cleaned them very well. There are very few natural stones in this area. We discovered four large cobble stones on the left side of Margaret's grave. This seems to be the edge of the cemetery and was possibly a stone wall.

We moved fallen branches out of the cemetery, pulled out saplings and weeds, raked and cleaned the area. As LeRoy was raking at the far right edge of the cemetery about eight feet to the right of Koert Sr.'s headstone, he discovered a square corner of stone sticking up about two inches out of the ground. We first had to move a tall sapling about 1½" around which was growing in the dirt on the headstone. We carefully excavated it, and discovered the headstone of James A. Van Schaick who died in 1844. As we cleared the debris and discovered headstones and footstones, the layout of the cemetery started to emerge. With the discovery of James' headstone, we then found his footstone.

As we looked at the layout, it then became obvious that there was too much space between Koert Sr., and James. We carefully poked and dug, and found what seemed to be another headstone about 4 inches under the ground. We carefully dug it out, and found part of a headstone. The name was on a piece that had been broken off. The inscription on the part we found read "Died Sept. 5, 1846, AE 75 yr. 7 mo. 25 da." This is the date and the age of Koert's wife, Margaret Wilson. This and the fact that she is buried next to him, makes it obvious that this is her. We will continue to search for the top of her headstone. The big branch or tree that had originally been lying on the ground immediately to the right of Koert's headstone was over where we found this headstone. When it fell it probably broke both Koert's and Margaret's headstones. So we had discovered an eighth headstone in the cemetery, that of Margaret Wilson Van Schaick, Koert Sr.'s wife.

We then looked at the front row. It then appeared that there was too much space between the headstone of Koert (the grandson) and Sarah Van Schaick. After carefully

digging, we discovered what seemed to be another headstone buried about 4 inches under the ground. After careful excavation, we lifted out the headstone of Slingerland Van Schaick. There were now nine people that we knew of buried in the cemetery.

After cleaning off the faces of the headstones we had discovered, we took pictures, did some rubbings, and recorded what was inscribed on all of the headstones.

In the back row were the older headstones. From left to right: Margaret Van Schaick, Koert Van Schaick (the infant son who died when he was three years old), Koert Van Schaick, Margaret Wilson Van Schaick, and James A. Van Schaick. These headstones are all older, square at the top, and in the same type of script. All of them, except Koert Sr.'s which is broken, have about two feet between the bottom of the stone and the writing. These will be quite simple to set back up by digging a hole, setting them up, and filling the hole back in. We set up Margaret Van Schaick's headstone in this way on July 20, 2004.

In the front row are all headstones from the 1860s, not as old as those in the back row. The headstones in the front row are those of (left to right) Jonathan Hutton, Koert Van Schaick (grandson of Koert), Slingerland Van Schaick, and Sarah Van Schaick. All of these headstones are the same style, rounded at the top, block lettering, and thicker. In the process of digging Jonathan and Slingerland's out, and looking at Koert's we discovered that all of the headstones in this row have very large bases with slots in them. The headstones fit into these slots to stand up. The bases have been pushed by tree roots and settled with the passage of a hundred and fifty years, but are all still there and unbroken. The four headstones in the front row are also unbroken. We were able to uncover the base and clean out the slot of Jonathan Hutton's and stand it up. Of those in the front row, we found footstones for Jonathan and Koert.

I had gotten a 5" x 7" plaque inscribed to read:

**KOERT VAN SCHAICK**

Born June 25, 1757 – Died May 5, 1826

Revolutionary War Veteran and Patriot

Barnes Smock's Artillery Company, of the Middle Brigade in Monmouth Co., NJ

First Van Schaick to emigrate to Schoharie Co.

We laminated it and attached it to a stone. We placed this stone next to Koert's grave. We also placed an American Flag on his grave to honor his service to his country as a Revolutionary War Soldier.

We are planning to go back. On our next trip we hope to learn if there are any more graves in this cemetery, take more pictures and rubbings, finish setting up the headstones, find the missing piece of Margaret Wilson Van Schaick's headstone, and make a detailed map of the cemetery.

Due to a very rainy and busy summer, LeRoy Van Schaick and Vicki and Paul Weinman went back for a second full day of work on **October 5, 2004.**

I (Vicki) had made a sign of cement, "VAN SCHAICK FAMILY CEMETERY", which we put up on the tree in the back of the cemetery.

We set up Slingerland, Sarah's, and Koert Jr's headstones.

Also during this trip we discovered and set Slingerland's footstone. We looked for, but did not find, footstones for Koert Jr. or for Sarah.

We found the top of Margaret Wilson Van Schaick's headstone with her name on it! This was such an exciting discovery. We also found a piece from the very bottom of

Margaret's headstone. We discovered Margaret's footstone. Most of it was disintegrating and was of the consistency of hard brown sugar. However, two of the pieces can be cleaned and put together and will be big enough to set in for her footstone.

We had brought a flag to put on James' grave, as we have found out that he is a Veteran. Also we found the bottom two pieces of James' headstone.

During this trip we also discovered the three pieces of Koert Sr.'s headstone below the piece with the writing on it. (Koert's headstone was in four pieces.)

While we were cleaning off the pieces of headstones we found and fitting them together, we found that four of the stones we had discovered laying on the ground and buried behind the second row at the back of the cemetery were not marble and did not fit onto any of the headstones. We realized that these four stones were shale. They were the headstones of enslaved people.

Also during this trip, we made a grid and mapped the cemetery.

Our next trip to the cemetery was **October 11, 2004**. During this trip we brought three large pieces of plywood. We cleaned the pieces of Koert Van Schaick (4 pieces), Margaret Wilson Van Schaick (3 pieces), and James A. Van Schaick (3 pieces) headstones. We fit them together on the plywood and put them together with concrete and masonry silicone. We cleaned off the four headstones of the enslaved people with water and a brush. We cleaned and put together Margaret Wilson Van Schaick's footstone. We worked on clearing out the path through the woods from the beehives to the cemetery. We searched for any other headstones and footstones, but did not discover any more. We also set up a tentative outline for the fence to go around the cemetery. We hope to put the fence up in the spring of 2005.

On **October 14, 2004**, we again spent the day at the cemetery. We stood up James A. Van Schaick's, Margaret Wilson Van Schaick's, and Koert Van Schaick's mended headstones. We used a loose piece from the bottom of Margaret's headstone for Sarah's footstone. We also used an extra piece from Margaret's footstone for Baby Koert's footstone. We set up the headstones of the four enslaved people. We cleared more brush. We leveled ground, and planted tulips, daffodils, and crocus bulbs.

## 4. The Van Schaick cemetery and who is buried here

### MAP:

At the back of the cemetery are the headstones of four enslaved people. These headstones have no inscriptions.

Margaret Van Schaick Died 1839	Koert Van Schaick (son) Died 1811	Koert Van Schaick Died 1826	Margaret W. Van Schaick Died 1846	James A. Van Schaick Died 1844
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Jonathan Hutton Died 1864	Koert Van Schaick Died 1863	Large Locust tree	Slingerland Van Schaick Died 1864	Sarah Van Schaick Died 1868
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### Headstone inscriptions:

#### Back row:

1. **"Margaret Van Schaick, died Sept. 9, 1839, Aged 36 years, 5 mo., 25 days."** (Daughter of Koert and Margaret Wilson Van Schaick. Born March 14, 1893. Listed on original visual survey of Schoharie Co. Cemeteries.)
2. **"Koert, son of Koert and Margaret Van Schaick, died Oct. 2, 1811, aged 3 years, 6 mos., 9 days."** (Son of Koert and Margaret Wilson Van Schaick. Born March 23, 1808. This headstone was underground and was discovered on July 18, 2004)
3. **"Koert Van Schaick, died May 5, 1826, aged 68 years, 10 mos., 9 days."** (Born June 25, 1757. Revolutionary War Veteran and Patriot. The first Van Schaick to emigrate to Schoharie County. Listed on the original visual survey of Schoharie Co. Cemeteries.)
4. **Margaret Van Schaick, wife of Koert Van Schaick, died Sept. 5, 1846, AE 75 yrs, 7 mo., 25 days."** (Born January 10, 1771. Her headstone was underground and was discovered on July 20, 2004.)
5. **"James A. Van Schaick, died Dec. 4, 1844, aged 30 years and 20 days."** (Son of Koert and Margaret Wilson Van Schaick. Born November 14, 1814. His headstone was underground and discovered on July 20, 2004. He was a veteran, an officer in the artillery company of the State Militia.)

#### Front row:

6. **"Jonathan Hutton, died April 3, 1864, aged 34 years, 4 mos, and 2 days. So Jesus Slept."** (Son-in-law of Joseph W. Van Schaick. Joseph

was one of Koert's and Margaret's children. Jonathan was husband of Elizabeth Van Schaick, daughter of Joseph Wilson and Elizabeth Slingerland Van Schaick. Born December 1, 1829. Listed on the original visual survey of Schoharie County Cemeteries.)

7. **"Koert Van Schaick, died November 30, 1863, aged 33 years, 11 mos, 13 days. My Husband."** (Son of Joseph W. and Elizabeth, grandson of Koert and Margaret. Born December 17, 1829. Listed on the original visual survey of Schoharie County Cemeteries. This was the only headstone standing when we arrived at the cemetery on July 18, 2004.)
8. **"Slingerland Van Schaick, died November 27, 1864. aged 21 years, 8 mos., and 13 days. "Be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh."** (Son of Joseph W. and Elizabeth, grandson of Koert and Margaret. Born March 14, 1843. His headstone was underground and discovered on July 20, 2004.)
9. **"Sarah, daughter of J.W. and E. Van Schaick, died April 5, 1868, aged 21 years, 11 mos., and 18 days. Thou art gone to the grave but we will not deplore thee whose God was thy ransom, thy Guardian and Guide. He gave thee, He took thee, and He will restore thee and death has no sting for the Saviour has died."** (Daughter of Joseph Wilson and Elizabeth, granddaughter of Koert and Margaret. Born April 23, 1846. Listed on the original visual survey of Schoharie County Cemeteries.)

Jonathan, Koert (grandson), and Slingerland (in the front row) all died quite young during 1863 – 1864, the years of the Civil War. We are trying to find out if any of them are Civil War Veterans and if any of them died in the war. There were also widespread typhus and cholera outbreaks during this time as well.

# Van Schaack Family Cemetery

Proposed Fence




Fence

TREE

TREE

Large Tree

TREE

-  = Headstone
-  = Footstone
-  = slave Headstone

Margaret  
V.S.  
1839

Koer  
V.S.  
1811

Koert  
V.S.  
1826

Margaret  
Wilson  
V.S.  
1846

James  
A.V.S.  
1844

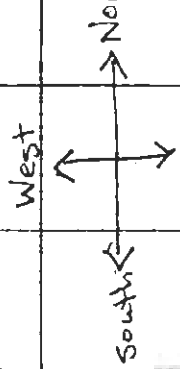
Jonathan  
Hutton  
H | 1864

Koert  
V.S.  
1863

Sling  
V.S.  
land V.S.  
11 | 1864

Sarah  
V.S.  
1868

Large  
Cobble  
Rocks



Proposed Fence

Fence

