

# **PRESERVING OUR FAMILY GENEALOGY**

**gary haas garylhaas@yahoo.com**

**How do you ensure that your genealogy makes it to future generations?**

## **Know the enemy**

Acts of God : Fire, wind, rain, computer crashes

Yourself : You know you have a key document but not where.  
Using glue, acidic paper, etc

Your family : Most family members couldn't care less.  
That is why good stuff turns up in rummage sales.  
Who is going to be going through your stuff

## **Organize your stuff**

If you keep your stuff in "shoeboxes" why would anybody want to organize it, you didn't.

There are many different methods all with their strength and weaknesses.

Example : You have a group photo of several families? How do you file it?

Option 1: Organize by using a folder for each family name / person / event  
Do you make multiple copies for each folder that a document might be filed in  
Can you make a list of all marriage, birth, death documents you have  
Can you make a list of each obituary that you have  
Can you make a list of everything you found by source WI Historical Society Library  
Can you make a list of everything you added in the last month  
Can you make a list of everything that you have for specific town/location

My method : INDEX YOUR STUFF

Identify each item by a number 00000001, 00000002, 00000003, .....  
Groups similar items alphabetically AA000001, AA000002,

Build an index using 3 x 5 cards or something similar containing a space  
for each item you want to track, names, dates, locations, comments, source  
For a group photo, use a separate card for each person or item you want to track  
For a group photo you might have a bunch of cards

To find something you just have to sort the cards

I have my "cards" entered into a computer program  
My collection of over 15,000 items is summarized in a printed book  
with several different sortings, groupings

There are computer programs that allow you to enter information in a "free format."  
The big question is can you print out reports.

## Get people interested in your stuff

If people don't know what you have why would they be interested in saving it

Publish newsletters                      Email makes it easy to distribute your stuff  
Fancy formats can not be read by everybody

Publish books                                Use regular laser printer to print text  
Use ink jet printer to print photos  
Use desktop publishing program to format  
Use \$70 comb binder

Put your stuff on a website    Cheap \$7 / month for 500 million bytes of storage  
Make available all newsletters available  
Post thumbnails of holdings  
Lost & Found section on your website  
Use your stuff as bait

Join a local history / genealogy group

## Make copies and distribute it

Digitize everything and create CD disks  
Current disks can hold 600 to 6000 images  
It costs about 20-50 cents to create a copy of a disk (labels, case)  
Cheaper than books, you don't have to print a minimum number of books  
Give them everything, let them be their own editors  
Annual updates - my organizing method means you just have to  
Concerns about format changes & technology advancements  
Don't throw away the paper - just stop worrying about losing stuff  
Easier to read on computer - zoom in / edit out noise  
Slide shows  
Thumbnail catalogs

Scanners                                      make sure scanner will not damage document - straight feed  
flatbed, multiple documents  
minimum 200 dpi    black & white scans better than color

Harddisk storage                          the more the merrier - I have an 80-meg drive

Digital cameras                            expensive up front costs  
cheaper than regular photo ( regular photo costs about 50 cents each )  
3.0 + megapixel minimum  
storage concerns  
battery concerns  
buying cheap always cost more in the future  
can be used as a scanner

CD burners                                    take 1 divided by writing speed rating to determine how many minutes  
it takes to create a disk    1 x = 1hour    12x = 5 minutes  
current capacity is 650 million , next step is 4.7 billion