
PLAIN HISTORY GENEALOGY GROUP

Covering Plain, Sauk Co, Wisconsin and Beyond

<http://tinyurl.com/53dn2>.....*Haas Bauer Main WebSite*
<http://tinyurl.com/4tlrt>.....*PHHG ALL Newsletters & Meeting Handouts*
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Vol 29 Dec 2005

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Meeting & Events Schedule

Saturday, Jan 14th, 2006
9:30 am, Plain, WI
Kraemer Library and Community Center

We will discuss how to use hand held computers, personal digital assistants in researching history and your ancestors. This meeting is open to anyone interested in genealogy or local history of the area. There will be experts on hand to help you with your research projects.

Internet and Goodies

Researching German Ancestors

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/whs0512/>

I recently gave a three-hour presentation on how to research your German ancestors. This link gives you access to the handout, notes from my speech, and clickable links to the Internet sites that I mentioned.

Milwaukee Braves Programs

<http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cgi-bin/docviewer.exe?CISOROOT=/tp&CISOPTR=13779>

The Wisconsin Historical Society has digitized and put the Milwaukee Braves baseball team programs from 1954, 1955, and 1957 on their web site.

Dischler / Voelkel WWII Memories

<http://museum.dva.state.wi.us/>
<http://www.wiscat.net/>

Part of telling your ancestor's story should involve describing their experiences during war. The Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison has lots of neat stuff and is a place that you should research.

Using the online catalog of WISCAT, I found stuff donated by soldiers from my hometown of Plain, WI and their service in WW II.

- Joseph Voelkel's letters written home from India and Australia covering dancing, drinking and tigers.

- Theresa M. Dischler-Brown donated papers, photos and a 30-minute taped interview describing her experiences as a WAAC.

Excel Online Training

<http://office.microsoft.com/training/training.aspx?AssetID=RC012005461033>

Here is a great free online introduction on how to use spreadsheets. It makes good use of audio and visual training tools. Check it out if you are new to spreadsheets.

WWI, Blau, Jennings, Crawford County

While walking around in the Milwaukee library the other day, I found a book by John G. Gregory called "Southwestern Wisconsin-Old Crawford County". All my ancestors lived in Sauk County Wisconsin. What could I find in a book about Crawford County? Here's where knowing your history is invaluable. Sauk County was once part of Crawford County. This book is full of all sorts of information about our ancestors

On page 1263 I found interesting information about a couple of doughboys from Plain and how they died in the war.

Blau, Simon E., 27; private, M.D. Base Hospital 53; overseas; septicaemia (It is commonly referred to as blood poisoning.) , May 2, 1918

Jennings, Walter C., 24; private, 128th infantry; overseas; diphtheria, March 2, 1918.

Extreme XMAS decoration

http://www.wxpnews.com/rd/rd.cfm?id=051206-FA-Xmas_Lights&mid=7617636567935733

this is a really weird example of what you get when you mix somebody with an engineering background, and way too much time and money on their hands

if you have a fast Internet connection I highly recommend that you download this three-minute movie.

It will make you thankful that you don't have this person as your next-door neighbor.

Best Search Engine

<http://www.mpl.org>

I found the world's greatest search engine the other day. No, you won't find this search engine on the Internet. It is you. Searching for stuff on the Internet in your pajamas is a neat but sometimes you have to actually look at things with your own eyes and process information with your own brain, the best portable computer made. I took a trip down to the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room at the Central Library of Milwaukee.

My starting point was the wall of genealogical publications covering the United States and a wide

variety of topics. There are a lot of publications dealing with genealogical research in Germany and Wisconsin. These are a treasure trove of information of history and tips. I flipped through a bunch of magazines and got lots of ideas for future research.

Walking around I found the card index of the Milwaukee County Federal Census of 1860 and 1870. There appears to be an index card for every person. This is one of the greatest things of just walking around looking at stuff. I always find something that makes me want to say "I didn't know that that existed".

On the other side of the room I found a bunch of filing cabinets. The librarian told me that these cabinets contained clippings from newspapers gathered by the Milwaukee County Genealogical Society. Remember the thrill you had going through your grandmothers old clippings and photos? Who knows? You might find treasure in this collection. And there is no index to these clippings. You have to actually go to the library and plow through these clippings.

This library has a tremendous collection of maps. They have the Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlases for the city of Milwaukee from 1876 to 1962. These are like plat maps with a lot more detail. Looking at the drawers containing these maps I was surprised to find Rascher's Fire Insurance Atlas for Milwaukee from 1888. Rashcer's is not as well-known as Sanborn's but the first thing you learn in doing research is that two sources are better than one. Different sources give you different views of the same information.

I also like to walk through the bookshelves just to see what's available. This is a great way to get a feel for what's available and ideas of things to do. It is also a way to find buried treasure. Some of this treasure is buried because some idiot misfiled the books. Walking through the aisles I found the Myers Orts Gazetteer. (If you are researching German ancestors and don't know what this gazetteer is, run don't walk to the nearest library with a copy.) I found his research tool misfiled and for all intents and purposes lost to the world. Make sure that when you are refiling things you put them back where you found them if you refile them at all. Many libraries prefer that you leave books and stuff in a central spot for the library staff to refile.

There is a lot more stuff at the library that you can only find by walking around. My experiences at this library can be repeated by you at your own favorite library. So take off your pajamas, get dressed, turn off your computer and visit a library.

Popes at Milwaukee Public Museum

<http://www.mpm.edu/exhibitions/special/vatican/index.php>

Knowing about history is very helpful when you are researching your ancestors. The church had a great deal influence over our ancestors lived. The Milwaukee Public Museum it's going to have a special exhibit on popes between February 4 and May 2, 2006.

UW-Madison Memorial Library German Resources

<http://memorial.library.wisc.edu/germen.htm#periodicals>

This web site gives you a list of German research stuff that you can find at the UW Madison Memorial Library. I like these types of lists because I usually find something new that I wasn't aware of or I get an idea of something else to look for.

Create your own stamps

<http://www.photostamps.com>

This site allows you to upload a digital image and the company will make real stamps with the image. The cost is slightly more than twice the cost of regular stamp.

This digital image could be of relatives, pets, friends, places etc. Image a Christmas mailing with your family on the stamp. How about weddings, anniversaries? Suppose you have a really cute kid? How would they look on the stamp.

Sauk County History 1880 & 1918

<http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/WI/WI-idx?type=browse&scope=WI.WILOCHISTS>
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~wisauk/QryIndex.htm>

Two great sources of information about the history of Sauk County Wisconsin are the local histories published in 1880 and 1918. These two links give you access to online versions of both of these books.

Microsoft Online Computer Check

<http://geeksaresexy.blogspot.com/2005/11/microsoft-anti-virus-public-beta.html>

virus and spyware cause a lot of problems for computer users. This is mostly because Microsoft has a really cruddy product.

Microsoft now has a web site which allows you to do an online check of your PC for a number of problems. It is free for now.

I ran the test on my PC. it took over 20 minutes and didn't find anything. This could be because I have very strong protection on my machine or the Microsoft online test is lame. give it a shot the price is right

Streamload.max store your stuff online

<http://mediamax.streamload.com/>

In the near future, people won't worry about how to store and back up their data. With access to a high speed internet connection you will be able to store your data on line. Streamload will let you store 250 billion bytes and more for only \$9.95 a month. That might sound expensive until you figure what you are "paying now" to manage your data. It "costs" your time to backup and find missing filings. To say nothing of the "costs" of losing a file completely.

With Streamload:

- all of your data is backedup
- you can access your data from anywhere

The downside is all of your stuff is sitting on a server somewhere that hackers can get at.

Personally I will wait until Google offers this product. Always go with somebody you trust.

Online Free Office Suite

<http://online.thinkfree.com/>

The future of computing is to be able to access, work with and share your data where ever you are.

Today if you want to work with spreadsheets, wordprocessing or presentation / powerpoint programs you have to have a PC with these programs physically located on them. Oh yeah, you have to pay big bucks for these programs

This site lets you use a free alternative to Microsoft's Office suite. The really neat thing is that the programs on the web. You don't have to load anything. They will even give you 30 million bytes of storage.

There is no such thing as a free lunch. You need a really fast connection to use this site.

This is a nice option if you need to crank out a quick spreadsheet or document. It also is another sign of the way that the future of computing is going to be.

Hildegarde Thering's Research Notes

Phone Lines

htaf0060.jpg April 28 1898

"The Richland Center Telephone Co extended its line to Reedsburg and connect our system by arrangement we will have access by telephone to LaValle, Spring Green, Black Earth and Madison."

"The new wire was put up last week connecting Spring Green with Big Hollow, Plain and White Mound."

Next time remember that our ancestors would not have complained that they didn't have high-speed Internet connection and a dialup would be just fine for them.

Ed Conley is Gassed
htaf0060.jpg April 28 1898

"Saturated Ed Conleys coat with kerosene oil and touched a match to it while he was yet inside of it. He caused their arrest and the matter was settled by the payment of \$100 to Conley by the defendants. Costs paid by Conley amounted to \$50."

I will have to look this case up in the court records in the Archives room at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library in Madison. I am guessing alcohol was involved somehow.

The Rock Part III

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/therock/>

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/therock200509/>

When you think about a hunk of rock that has information about your ancestors, your first thoughts are of tombstones. This story is about a piece of stone that is not a tombstone but has information about dozens of people.

A few years ago I found out that people from my father's one-room country schoolhouse carved their initials on a rock located in a field near in the school. This last summer I got an opportunity to view the stone at a family reunion. My uncle and I tried to retrace the run from the school, through the woods, and through an open field to the rock that my uncle remembered doing numerous times as student. Unfortunately things had changed during the last 50 years since he made this run as a child. After walking through the woods and traipsing through a marsh with waist high grass for couple hours we gave up trying to find the rock.

We met up with my uncles who were at a nearby bar in the country drinking the elixir of knowledge. My smarter uncle suggested that we forget about trying to go through the woods. He said we would probably have better luck driving through a nearby cornfield. After loading up on fluids on his hot summer day, my uncle and I made another attempt.

We found an easy path to drive through the cornfield and found another path through the woods, to the open field. Keep in mind that we were looking for the stone in an open field. Just as we were about to get out of the woods, my uncle looked to the right in the brush in the woods and saw the elusive rock that we were searching for. We could've easily walked by the rock and missed it.

Now the fun starts. The rock was no longer in an open field. It was covered by brush, moss and trees that had grown up over the last 50 years people. If you have ever attended my presentation on tombstones, you know that I have a bucket of tools that I use to capture information on tombstones.

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/phqnews/phq0307.pdf>

I added a handheld pruning shears to my tools, gathered a bunch of volunteers including my dad and started attacking the rock. After a day's worth of work by five volunteers we cleared most of the moss from the rock and all of the brush hiding the rock. The pruning shears was lifesaver and I was surprised that it even worked on small trees.

As a sidelight, I wished I had brought a tape recorder along. Being around the rock charged up my father who started remembering all sorts of stories about his school and its students.

The question now is what is the best way to record the information on the rock. We'll treat this just like a tombstone but only bigger. Eventually we will do rubbings and make plaster casts of the carvings.

Our first efforts will be to take a lot of digital photos of the rock and its initials. The biggest problem is that many of the initials carved in the rock are difficult to see. As with a tombstone we don't want to cause any damage by using such things as shaving cream to make the initials easier to see. If only we could get a big red crayon and color in the carvings.

I was hit with a brainstorm. Why not take the digital photos and using a digital editing program

draw red lines on the initials. This is made much easier when you blow up the digital image on a computer. The first batch of photos that I took of the rock were made using a 3 megapixel digital camera. This worked OK, but I recently got a eight megapixel digital camera which will allow us to take some really neat photos that can be blown up tremendously. The next visit to the rock will be spring 2006.

What have I learned from its effort. First, having the right tools is important. Whether it is a pruning shear, a digital camera, a digital photo editor or a tape recorder to record oral history, the right tool makes a difference. Second, things change over the years and memories fade. What was an easy run through a clear woods, was now a difficult trip through overgrown brush. Third and most important to ask for help. You never know who and where you'll find somebody who has information that you need. It might even be an uncle in a drinking establishment.

How To Digitize Images

How to Digitize Images

There are lots of benefits to converting your photos and research documents into digitize images. The main benefit is that you can convert thousands of pieces of paper into digital images that will fit on a handful of computer CDs.

Once you have your images on computer CDs, you can share your research with relatives and fellow researchers for just a few dollars. Imagine making a paper copy to share of the thousands of piece of paper you have gathered over the years. A side benefit is that discs of your research makes inexpensive gifts that many of your relatives will greatly appreciate.

It's a lot easier to organize your research materials if they're in a digitize format. First off instead of being in a bunch of filing cabinets and piles, your research materials will fit onto one hard disk. It is always easier to organize things if they're in one spot. Building an index of digitized information makes it incredibly easy to get at stuff.

Imagine how easy it is to search for things using a good online catalog. Even if you don't digitize your paper documents, building a digitized index to your stuff is invaluable. Building a digitized index is complicated and has lots of gotchas. Rather than get into a lot of geeky details, I strongly recommend that you create your digitized index using a spreadsheet program.

Another benefit of using digitized indexes is that you can use optical character recognition OCR to convert digital images and to words you can use in a regular wordprocessing program. You can even use OCR to translate from one language to another. Here briefly at the steps needed to translate German documents into English. Step 1, scan the German documents into your computer. Step 2, use an OCR program to convert the digitized image into German words in your wordprocessing program. Step 3, use one of the many free translating services on the Internet to convert the German into English. This process works well with normal type fonts. You can get OCR computer programs which will work with even the old Gothic German fonts, but it will cost you big-bucks.

Many people think that a desktop scanner hooked up to your PC is the only way to digitize images. I have a 3 megapixel digital camera which works well as a portable scanner. I've been able use this in many libraries however there are some that don't permit them.

It only takes a few seconds to digitize an image with the digital camera as compared to 30 to 40 seconds using a desktop scanner.

I've been able to get acceptable quality making copies of my digital camera. You do need to play around with the various settings on your camera and learn how to use it.

My digital camera works very well with digitizing books. It works OK making copies of displays on microfilm readers. The images that you make with a digital camera won't be perfect. But there are lots of free programs like Picassa and Irfanview to fix up your photos.

There are lots of options to choose from one buying a digital camera. Here are the key things to consider. Make sure you get a digital camera capable of taking pictures three megapixel or higher. Next make sure you have enough storage for all the pictures you will take in one setting. Most digital cameras come with a small card that will only hold 10 to 15 photos. Finally make sure that you have enough batteries to take all the photos you want to take in one setting. Some digital cameras will use up a battery after only a few photos.

Using a desktop digital scanner is the best choice when you need to get a high quality digitized image. I strongly recommend that you get a geek to help you learn how to use your scanner. Each scanner is unique. It takes a lot of practice and experience to take a digitize an images. It takes a lot of patience to work with a desktop digital scanner. They can be incredibly complicated and finicky.

Let's look at some of the features that you will want to get on your desktop scanner.

Many scanners connect to your PC through a USB port. Make sure that you get a USB 2.0 Port which is 40 times faster than a USB 1.0 Port. Believe me you will notice the difference.

If you want a scanner that is easy to move around check out the power supply. Some scanners come with a clunky power brick power brick. Some scanners don't even need a separate power supply they can draw from your laptop computer.

The scanner's size is another consideration. Do you have room for big clunky desktop scanner? I have a digital scanner that is less than an inch thick. This makes it very easy to scanned big floppy old books.

Some scanners have a paper feed which make it easy to make copies of a bunch of pieces of paper. However this paper feed is also capable of chewing up your priceless documents.

If you want to convert old 35mm slides and negatives, make sure that the scanner has a

special adapter that is needed to do this. Digitizing 35mm slides will test your patience. It can take up to five minutes to digitize a 35mm slide.

Setting up a scanner should be fairly straightforward. Most manufacturers give you straight forward easy-to-read instructions. **DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT. WORKING WITH A SCANNER CAN BE THE MOST FRUSTRATING THING YOU DO WITH THE COMPUTER. GET A GEEK WITH EXPERIENCE TO SPEND AN HOUR WITH YOU AND YOUR SCANNER. THIS WILL SAVE YOU WEEKS OF FRUSTRATION.**

Most scanners allow you to set up a boatload of scanning options. Here are some quick tips to consider when you're scanning items.

If you are scanning an item in grayscale (black-and-white is something completely different and rarely used), set the resolution to 200 to 600 dpi. For color images use 300 to 1200 dpi resolution.

Save the image in JPEG format. PDF format is not as flexible and it's difficult to use digital photo editors to fix an image. TIFF and BMP will create tremendously large files on your PC without a big increase in quality.

Somewhere on your scanner you have the ability to set default options for scanning documents and images. Be an Explorer and find his default settings to make your scanning process quirk or an easier. This is especially important if the scanner has buttons to scan, e-mail or print an image.

Another benefit of having a scanner is that you can use it to print a copy just like to read other copier.

Sometimes I will use the software included with the scanner to scan items. Other times I will open up a digital image editing program and scan it directly into something like Paint Shop Pro. That way I edit the image right after I take it.

Digitizing your paper research documents can take lots of time and effort. But the results are worth it.