

PLAIN HISTORY GENEALOGY GROUP

Covering Plain, Sauk Co, Wisconsin and Beyond

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<http://tinyurl.com/4tlrt>.....**PHHG ALL Newsletters & Meeting Handouts**
<http://tinyurl.com/4rrlv> <http://tinyurl.com/66w3v>.....**Newsletter Table of Contents**
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Meeting & Events Schedule

Saturday, Nov 11th, 2006

9:30 am, Plain, WI

Kraemer Library and Community Center

We will discuss how to research at the Wisconsin Society Library in Madison WI. This library is a tremendous source of information about genealogy and history. This meeting is open to everyone.

The second edition of the "Research Guide to the Wisconsin Historical Society Library" will be available at the meeting.

Saturday April 21, 2007

MCGS Biennial Workshop – Milwaukee, WI
Cyndi Howells This is the Cyndi that created Cyndi's list.

Internet and Goodies

Salt Lake City Downtown Redevelopment

<http://lds.org/newsroom/showrelease/0,15503,3881-1-24116,00.html>

Salt Lake City's downtown is having some tough times. Town leaders have come up with an aggressive plan that effect downtown for the next 5 years. Make sure that you check out its status

before you make a visit to the best genealogical library in the world, the Family History Library.

Slang of the 1920's

<http://local.aaca.org/bntc/slang/slang.htm>

Every generation has its own way of talking. This site can be handy if your ancestor wrote something that you don't understand.

I hate to go on a date with a gold digger and find out that the bank is closed.

Digitizing Cassette Tapes PlusDeck2

http://www.geeks.com/details.asp?invtid=PLU_SDECK2C&cpc=SCH

If you have a lot of cassette tapes that you would like to convert to a digital format, this might be the toy for you. This can be great if you have old Partridge Family tapes or recorded genealogical interviews. I got one of these for about \$100. Here are some things to think about.

- 1) The device automatically switches to side B so you don't have to get up and switch sides.
- 2) With my old tapes, the first 10-15 seconds of side B doesn't already get the right speed.
- 3) The recording process can be controlled from your PC.
- 4) CONFIGURE - Tape Side: I use the option to record side A & B into separate files.
- 5) CONFIGURE - Type: I use MP3 256 for highest quality.
- 6) CONFIGURE - Auto Cut: The program has problems breaking a tape into individual songs. I record each side into its own files.

Keep in mind that you have a low quality cassette tape as input; this means that you will not get CD-quality output. But I am happy with it.

**Indexing German Wisconsin Church Records
– Roger Minert**
<http://webpub.byu.net/rm222/WisconsinPage.htm>

Indexers of records are friends of genealogical researchers. Roger Minert is an expert on the German language, a great researcher and a fantastic speaker. He has organized a group that is indexing Wisconsin church records written in German. They estimate a publish date in the 1st half of 2007.

Looking Back

St. Luke's Chimes 1931

This issue of the Chimes includes information on all students of the high school from its beginning through 1931.

On September 8, 1920, the high school started with 7 students; 4 freshmen, Mildred Volk, Cecelia Neuheisel, Laura Reuschlein, Julius Weiss and 3 sophomores Alma Nachreiner, Hildegard Thering, Martha Weiss. The Sisters Community room in the old house was the first recitation room and the Sisters Community table the first work bench.

On December 31, 1920 the north-east corner of the "magnificent building on the hill" became the high school.

In September 1921 there were 12 students, 1922 21 students. On June 1923 Alma Nachreiner and Hildegard Thering became the first graduates.

In 1924, every Friday afternoon movies were shown in the auditorium.

Early in 1926 a High School Orchestra was organized.

On October 21, 1927 the St. Thomas Literary Society was organized, with the first issue of "The Zenith" published in November, 1927.

The orchestra made its first appearance in public on the occasion of Reverend Vincent J. Peter's first solemn Mass on February 5, 1929. (The 1st vocation to the priesthood in Sauk County.)

On September 15, 1929 the Holy Name Rally of Sauk, Juneau and Richland counties was held in Plain.

In 1931, St. Luke's Parish was part of the LaCrosse diocese under Bishop McGavick, Pastor Beschta, Rev. Charles Surges.

The course of study at the high school included 4 years of Religion and 4 years of English.

There were 4 years of language the first two years being Latin, the 3rd year a choice between advanced Latin and beginning German with German in the 4th year.

There were 4 years of history, Ancient, Medieval, American and Modern.

There were 4 years of Math and Science, the first year and a half, Algebra. The second semester of the 2nd year covered Plane Geometry. Junior year covered Chemistry with Physics covered in the Senior year.

Students could choose from 5 classes with electives of Music, Orchestra, Commercial Arithmetic, Commercial Geography and Typewriting.

The faculty between 1921 and 1931 ranged between 6 and 8 sisters. All but one of the Sisters' names started with Sr. Mary. The one exception was Sr. Margaret Mary.

If I counted correctly, these were the student counts in the elementary grades.

1 st	46	2 nd	45	3 rd	17	4 th	49
5 th	43	6 th	45	7 th	32	8 th	21

There were extra activities for the student body in 1931. The Girls' Glee Club, the Boys' Glee Club, St. Luke's Orchestra, the Rhythm Band, St. Thomas Literary Society, Latin Club called "Comites", the Zenith Staff, the Annual Staff, Alumni Association.

The 1931 Chimes contains a 3-page calendar of activities in almost a week-by-week recap.

A favorite of mine talks about visits to each of the classes by Fr. Beschta. His message was "the year would be a most pleasant one if we were faithful to the rules."

On November 30, 1930 a well known magician, the Mysterious Mr. Kopp entertained the students in the afternoon.

On January 22nd through January 28th, 1931 movies were shown at night by the Manhattan Features Corporation. There were matinees for the children. On January 29, 1931 the movie, "The Passion", was shown to school children for free.

On February 26, 1931 there was a discussion of the arrangement of a tennis court and a tennis club. On March 2, 1931 officers of the tennis club were elected, Marcellyne Fowler as President, Angela Beck as secretary and treasurer.

On March 23, 1931, Brother Francis from St. Louis, Missouri from the "Brothers of Mary", gave a talk on vocations.

On April 6, 1931, the First Annual Meeting and Banquet of the Alumni Association was held.

The 1931 Chimes contained literary contributions from several students. I liked Esther Hausladen's description of sports. "During winter months, the High School boys played basketball at the old St. Luke's School House" and the girls would play "Fox and Goose".

German Research Overview

This is going to be a discussion about how to research your German ancestors. We will be discussing tricks, techniques, tools and data sources that I have used in researching my ancestors from southern Bavaria.

The objective is to give you lots of ideas that you can use in your research. A success will be if you say to yourself "Wow I never thought of that".

I've given presentations on this topic in the past. Here are links to the handouts, my rough speaking notes and a web page with links to a number of great web pages.

<http://tinyurl.com/ovy9a>

Links to a similar presentation

<http://tinyurl.com/zdo9b>

<http://tinyurl.com/hsqfv>

<http://tinyurl.com/k2emh>

Let's start with some of the tools that I have.

You can find lots of uses for spreadsheets, word processing and presentation programs. Instead of spending hundreds of dollars on Microsoft Office, the **Openoffice suite** is free and is very compatible with Microsoft office.

<http://tinyurl.com/4vqwe>

Printing in PDF format allows you to share your work with others. PDF 995 is a free alternative to Adobe Acrobat expensive PDF writer. Using PDF writers I've created 4' by 9' pedigree charts that I had printed at Kinko's on 1 sheet of paper.

<http://www.pdf995.com/>

Flash drives, external drives, and PDAs allow you to back up your data and take it with you.

There are lots are reasons to hire a researcher. I needed a researcher to read, translate and interpret some German documents. I was looking for researcher with strong skills who would know all the tricks and traps. I also needed somebody to do research onsite in Germany.

I strongly suggest that you are aggressive in giving information to a hired researcher. Giving the hired researcher names, places, dates and pedigrees eliminates the need for the researcher to spend your money gather information you already have.

Finding a researcher is like asking somebody out for a date. A good researcher for me might be a terrible researcher for you.

Identifying a qualified researcher can be tough. I went to Salt Lake City to find my researcher. I knew that there were lots of

German researchers that volunteer at the Family History Library. This allowed me to test potential researchers with documents that I needed translated.

Setting goals is an important part of the process. For some researchers you need to make a detailed list of items to be done. With my researcher I gave her a flexible budget and guidelines and just pointed her in the right direction. We had a couple of conversations about our views about genealogy before I even thought of hiring her.

Setting expectations is important to a successful research project. What type of information will I receive? How quick will I receive it? How much will it cost? If you don't have answers these questions before you start, it is unlikely that the project will be successful.

I wanted my researcher to make photocopies of all original documents. This cost over five dollars a page. My researcher only charged an hourly fee. She did not charge me for her travel time or room and board in Germany. She charged \$85 an hour, which was cheaper than the \$100 an hour charged by researchers in Germany.

Make sure that you have an agreed-upon method of communication. Do you want to get a monthly progress report through e-mail? Or are you willing to not hear things for months.

The really good stuff is written in German.

Even if you don't read German, if you can tell the difference between an elephant, a giraffe and a buffalo, you can read German. Just like these animals, German letters have characteristics that can help you make out words.

We will be dealing mostly with handwritten German as opposed to Gothic print. With a cheat sheet of letters and a little practice, you should be able to read Gothic print.

I have grouped letters with similar characteristics together. The handout has similar letters grouped together. Some characteristics that you want to look for are:

- is the letter capitalized
- does it have a part that descends below the "line", like g's and p's
- does it have a part that ascends above the "line", like b's and d's
- does it neither descend or ascend, like e's and n's
- does it ascend and descend like f's h's s's

Even with cheat sheets, reading the old German hand writing can be tough. Zimmermann is a tough name. *Zimmermann*. M's, N's and E's look very similar. Your only option with words like this is to count the points.

Here are some of the tools that I have in my translation tool kit.

I've got good magnifier from Magnabrite.

Scanning and digitizing a document into a computer format. Once you have a document on a computer, you can enhance and blow up hard to read the words. I have several dictionaries. I have a great big one for the tough words. I have Latin and German dictionaries on my hand-held PDA that I can carry with me everywhere.

The first step in reading a document is to identify the language that it is written in. Obviously most documents will be written in German. Catholic Church records will contain Latin. In some parts of Germany, documents about your ancestors could be in French.

The second step is to identify the type of document. Is that a birth, marriage, death or land record? You can expect to find certain types of information in specific documents. For example, in a marriage document you would expect to find the names of the parents of the bride and groom.

The third step is to identify the easy stuff. You don't have to eat the elephant in one bite. Just as you can't read every word doesn't mean you can't get information from the document.

You can find names **underlined** and in readable Latin format. Another neat thing about the German language is that all **nouns are capitalized**.

Dates can be tricky. Abbreviated dates of 7ber, 8ber, 9ber and 10ber are not July, August, September and October. They are September, October, November and December. The first three letters of these months' names show their Latin origins.

Here is an example of looking for the easy stuff. I can easily translate this marriage record identifying dates in the names of people and places. Here is a major trick. Look for notes and comments added to the original document. The extra comment on this document says that my ancestor was beheaded for killing his wife.

Another issue that yet to deal with it is that individuals' handwriting styles are different. With sloppy handwriting, make a cheat sheet of what the writer's alphabet looks like.

Reading German documents requires that you are flexible with spellings.

First off there are lots of German letters that are interchangeable. B's and P's are interchangeable. I have found information about Pronolds with a P written with a B and filed under the B's.

Spelling rules were not formalized until after the 1870s. This explains why names were spelled phonetically.

Here is a translation tool that I strongly recommend that you get. **This site gives you German computer fonts.**

<http://www.germancorner.com/fonts/>

These computer fonts can be extremely helpful in making cheat sheets of the names of the people and places that you are researching.

You type these names in the first column of a spreadsheet in a regular font. You copy these names from the first column to the second and the third column. You then change the fonts on the second and third columns.

This is a quick and easy technique to create a fantastic cheat sheet.

There are certain letter combinations that are common in German. For example like in English, Q's are almost always followed by a U. J's are followed by vowels. I's are followed by consonants. C's are followed mostly by H's. This site gives you a chart showing the frequency of letters following other letters.

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/tools/germanletterdistr.pdf>

Sometimes you will have identified all but a few letters in a word. With this program you tell it which letters you know in which letters you don't know, and it will give you all possible combinations.

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/tools/wordperm.html>

I strongly recommend books by Roger Minert. He is an expert in the field and easy as you useful and usable information on how translate German documents.

Deciphering Gothic records by Fay S. Dearden is a great cheat sheet to have in your tool kit.

"Deciphering Gothic Records"

by Fay S. Dearden (small flip-pamphlet on Germanic handwriting, abbreviations, symbols, examples)

"If I can You Can Decipher Germanic Records"

by Edna M. Bentz Examples of word written in script

"Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents"

by Roger P. Minert, GRT Publications

"Spelling Variations in German Names..."

by Roger P. Minert, GRT Publications 2002

Researching your German ancestors' immigration is a great way to find their home in Germany. Knowing their ancestral home is a key to locating German documents.

Information about German ancestors' immigration can be found in obituaries, naturalization records, vital records and newspaper articles.

It's helpful to know history. For example, which ports were popular, when did Castle Garden close and Ellis Island open.

Prior to emigrating, my ancestors had to get permission to leave from the local government. These documents contain names, dates and descriptions of my ancestors.

My ancestors also had to post notices in the newspaper that they were emigrating to give their creditors a chance to get repaid.

There are lots of good source of information about your German ancestors immigration to America.

The US Federal Census contains the year the person immigrated to America. Census records can be gotten online at libraries through Ancestry.com and Heritage Plus. Many libraries let their cardholders access Heritage Plus at home for free.

On other great resource is a series of books called **Germans to America**. This series is an index of Germans arriving in America.

The New York Times is often overlooked source of information.

Newspapers and major ports had sections dedicated to the arrival of ships. I found an interesting description of the voyage my ancestor experienced. This included length of the trip, ports visited, and the weather on the trip.

Between 1855 an 1892 immigrants were processed at Castle Garden in New York. There is an Internet site that has a searchable index.

<http://www.castlegarden.org/about.html>

After 1891 immigrants were processed at Ellis Island in New York. The Ellis Island Internet site has more information than the Castle Garden site. It has images of the ship and digital images of the passenger lists.

<http://www.ellislandrecords.com/>

A better way to access arrival information is Stephen P. Morse's site. This site can be used to access both the Castle Garden and the Ellis Island sites. It is much easier to use.

<http://stevemorse.org/ellis/cg.html>

<http://tinyurl.com/a26kj>

Here are some reference tools that I strongly recommend.

"They Came in Ships" by John P. Colletta 2nd edition. This is by far the best book I find information about your immigrant ancestors.

US Ports and Available Immigrant Information

<http://www.genesearch.com/ports.html>

Gazetteers and maps are an essential part of your tool kit.

Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs is the best gazetteer of Germany.

How to Read & Understand Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs by Wendy Uncapher. 2003

Maps www.mapquest.com

Let's focus on the types of documents you should look for. **My biggest suggestion is never accept "It doesn't exist."**

Civil marriage records were not kept in Bavaria until 1876 and after. This doesn't mean that local governments didn't gather marriage related documents much earlier.

I remember looking for my great great-grandmother's divorce court records from around 1900. I found the Sauk County Wisconsin civil court records for the time and noticed she was not listed in the index at the front of the book. Having nothing better to do at the time I started paging through the court records and stumbled across the divorce records. Seems they did not put the really good cases in the index.

Keep in mind that people created the records and it seems like they were all creative in their spellings and indexing of names.

I couldn't find my Bauer ancestors permission to leave Germany under the Bs. It was filed underneath the Ws. There were five unrelated people on his permission document. It was filed underneath the name of the first person on the document. How did I find my ancestors document?

Looking through the film, I found that somebody in the 1930s typed a list of all the permission to leave requests. If you asked if such a list existed, you would get a No. My guess is that the Nazis created this list of potential spies and collaborators for World War II.

If you are not using <http://www.familysearch.org> of the LDS church, you are ignoring one of the best genealogical resources in the world.

There is information on everybody, even if you don't have any connection to the church.

This abbreviated web address takes you to some fantastic **German research guides**. These guides are free.

- Determining a Place of Origin in Germany
- Genealogical Handbook of German Research
- German Genealogical Word List
- German Letter-Writing Guide
- Germany Research Outline
- Handwriting Guide: German Gothic
- How to Use the Meyers Gazetteer
- Latin Genealogical Word List
- Modern Germany Map
- The German Empire Map, 1871 to 1918

<http://tinyurl.com/22llr>

Germany is made up of several states that used completely **different methods to generate and store documents**. The LDS site describes these methods. <http://tinyurl.com/3hmog>

Larry O. Jensen's book about German research is on the LDS site. Jensen is a possible speaker for the German Interest Group July 2007 day-long seminar at Whitewater, WI. If you are researching German ancestors, you have to go.

<http://tinyurl.com/m6xyx>

I mentioned earlier that local German governments created marriage related documents. I have found documents going back to 1800. The purpose of these documents is to prove that the couple can support themselves. These documents contain everything but the kitchen sink.

I found my ancestor's report card from the early 1800s. She got a grade of "needy" in commonsense.

The groom had had to prove that he had met his military duties. The standard document includes a physical description of the person.

Another part of these marriage documents was typically an agreement between the father and the son transferring land rights. This agreement was unusually detailed. **One stated that the son would have to give his sisters: two cows, a wedding dress, a dresser, a bed in two set of sheets.**

This site using easy access to the German IGI files of the LDS church. First, you check for the town name. Then you click on the link to the IGI details on LDS site.

<http://www.igi-index.de/?seite=main>

<http://tinyurl.com/d6pm3>

<http://www.igi-index.de/?seite=download>

The LDS site gives you a list of everybody from that German church in the IGI file.

Another tremendous source of information is the Wisconsin Historical Society Library in Madison Wisconsin. Like the LDS web site, you should spend a lifetime on the Wisconsin Historical Society web site. What you say other than "They have stuff".

<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/>

I strongly recommend that you become very familiar with the library's on-line catalogs.

<http://arc.library.wisc.edu/>

<http://madcat.library.wisc.edu/index.html>

The archives room on the fourth floor has plat maps going back to the 1850s. Sometimes researching your ancestors doesn't yield results. In these cases you need to research family, friends, almost anybody who knew your ancestors. Plat maps show you who lived next to one another. Next-door neighbors might just be the family and friends that a key to unlocking information about your ancestors.

The archives room on the fourth floor has diaries and personal reminiscences. If your ancestors are like mine, they did not leave any diaries. However the diaries of people from the towns your ancestors lived in might include references to your ancestors. If nothing else it adds depth to your ancestors' stories.

The Wisconsin Historical Society Library has lots of local histories. In the early 1900s, the pastor of my ancestors' wrote the history of their churches. These histories included a detail list of when and where parish members emigrated from.

The Wisconsin Historical Society Library has a second-largest collection of newspapers in United States. Only the Library of Congress has a larger collection.

There were lots of newspapers in Wisconsin that were written in German. You can find neat stuff in these newspapers. I found a copy of an ad from the German shipping line to my ancestors came to America on.

Almost every newspaper ever published in Wisconsin is on microfilm in the microforms room. These are great sources for articles of births, marriages, bankruptcies, and obituaries.

The next source of information about my German ancestors is unbelievable. It definitely falls in the category of "No, it doesn't exist". In the 1930s somebody did a **doctoral dissertation on all the people who ever emigrated from my ancestors' German hometown.** This is an unbelievable source of names, dates and places. I found by looking at the online catalog of a German university.

There are videos of immigrants landing at Ellis Island in the early 1900s. These are tremendous way of understanding what our ancestors had to do to get to America.

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/papr/nychome.html>

EBay is a tremendous source of genealogical information. You can find picture postcards and family histories from America in Germany. Don't overlook this a source of unique information.

<http://www.ebay.com>

Here are some web sites that I have found very helpful in my research.

German Interest Group

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~wigig/index.html>

This is a great organization to join. The quarterly newsletter is worth the annual membership. The annual seminar held at UW-Whitewater is on my list of things not to miss.

BYU Independent Study

<http://ce.byu.edu/is/site/courses/freecourses.cfm>

This site has great online training on how to research German ancestors. The site even offers on-line training courses in bowling and swimming.

Making of America

<http://www.hti.umich.edu/m/moagrp/>

<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa/>

These two sites give you access to on-line, digitized magazines and books from the 1800's. There is no better source of information than documents written during the time. There are searchable indices to these holdings.

Get Aerial photos of Germany 1940s

<http://home.att.net/~wee-monster/photos.html>

This site tells you how to order aerial photos from the US Federal government. These photos were taken by the US Army Air Force. These photos are helpful if your ancestors' German hometown was destroyed during World War II or if you just want to be able to track the change in the community.

Bavarian Satellite Photos

<http://www.geodaten.bayern.de/bayernviewer/index2.html>

This is a great site for getting high resolution satellite photos.

UW-Madison Library Genealogy Resources

<http://memorial.library.wisc.edu/Genealogy.pdf>

There are lots of great libraries on the UW-Madison campus. This is list of genealogical resources.

Cyndi's List - Germany

<http://www.cyndislist.com/germany.htm>

This is tremendous source of information about websites about German. You could and should spend months going through these sites.

Basic Research Outline for German Genealogy

<http://home.att.net/~wee-monster/outline.html>

This is yet another source of information on how to research German ancestors.

There is lots of information about our German ancestors. Hopefully this discussion has given you some new ideas of where and how to research.