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# PLAIN HISTORY GENEALOGY GROUP

Covering Plain, Sauk Co, Wisconsin and Beyond

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<a href="http://tinyurl.com/53dn2">http://tinyurl.com/53dn2</a>	.....Haas Bauer Main WebSite
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## Meeting & Events Schedule

**Saturday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2008**  
**9:30 am, Plain, WI**  
**Kraemer Library and Community Center**

We will have a discussion on how to use cemeteries to research ancestors covering the types of information that you can get from a cemetery. We will also talk about the amazing things that Mormons of the LDS Church are doing with genealogical research. Everybody is welcome.

## Internet and Goodies

### **County Flags of Bavaria, Germany**

<http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/de-by-3.html#old>

This web site has a lot of information about the counties in Bavaria Germany. It seems like every community and County has their own flag.

On June 30, 1972, there was a significant municipal reform which resulted in the combining of numerous counties. This web site is a nice research reference as to which counties were combined.

### **Questions to Ask a Research Facility Before Visit**

<http://genealogy.about.com/od/libraries/a/questions.htm?nl=1>

It can be very disappointing to take a research trip to a library, only to find out that they are closed for a local holiday. This web site gives you a list of things to consider before you make the research trip.

### **ZIMBIO LDS Church related blog**

<http://www.zimbio.com/Latter+Day+Saints>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whose members are Mormons, is the world's leading organization in gathering genealogical information. This web site covers a wide variety of information about the Church. This is a great place to find out about new information and services offered by the Church.

## Mind Mapping Resources Tools & Tips

<http://www.collegedegree.com/library/college-life/99-mind-mapping>

<http://www.inspiration.com/Inspiration>

One of the biggest challenges faced by a researcher is how to organize all the facts, dates, and names gathered. The mind is a wonderful and flawed tool. The way you organize your information can determine your success.

There are software programs that will allow you to create Mind maps. Mind maps are out-lines on steroids.

I've just started using this tool and I am finding it easier to capture the stuff bouncing around in my head. I'm especially pleased with the program I selected, Inspiration.

## Familysearch Research WIKI – Germany

<https://wiki.familysearch.org/en/Germany>

Wikis are web sites that are like an encyclopedia except the readers add information. The correctness of information on Wikis can be suspect. However there is usually some extraordinary information if you are willing to dig through the questionable stuff. This is a fantastic site and I strongly recommend that you click on and explore every link.

## Online Tools

I don't think researching my family History would be much fun if I didn't have an Internet connection and access to millions of web sites. It is so much fun to find a new piece of information while searching the net. This will be a discussion of some of my favorite web sites to research and free tools that I found on the Internet.

The first place that I recommend everybody search is the online site of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church is sometimes referred to as LDS. Its members are known as Mormons.

Many people wonder why this Church would have information about their German, Catholic ancestors. Genealogy is a key part of the Mormon's religion. Their members have been microfilming almost every record they can get their hands on in Europe since the 1930s.

In many cases it can be easier to get your hands on German documents through a local Family History Center than it is to try to look for these documents in a German government office.

The LDS church has a tremendous web site.

<http://www.familysearch.org>

This site has unbelievable information.

One of these treasure troves of information is the numerous free books and guides that cover every phase of doing genealogical research. Instead of spending thousands of dollars building a library of books, you can get the same information from the LDS church for free. Here are some of the guides that I recommend that you look at.

Articles <http://tinyurl.com/6prdcB>

Germany <http://tinyurl.com/569qpn>

Genealogical Handbook of German Research  
Germany Research Outline Guidance

<http://tinyurl.com/58yw7w>

Documents Available Bayern / Bavaria

<http://tinyurl.com/5wpzgu>

This is a nifty section that gives you detail information about the birth, marriage, death records that are available.

The LDS church has a tremendous online catalog of the microfilms and books that they have gathered through the years.

<http://tinyurl.com/yz5hgh>

The catalog allows you to search by place, surname and keyword. I always use the keyword search because the place or surname that I am looking for may not be in the title.

Spelling can be the reason why you don't find what you looking for it in the catalog. The German language has special characters that don't have English counterparts. For example my ancestors came from Waldmünchen. How should I enter the u with the two dots above it into search engines? I could enter Waldmünchen, Waldmunchen or Waldmuenchen. When in doubt I try all options. It seems as though the LDS catalog prefers Waldmunchen.

Once you find an item on the catalog that interests you, be sure to click on the View Film Notes button. This'll give you a detailed description of the rolls of microfilms and the number assigned to it. You will need this assigned number to order the film.

Over the years, the LDS church has accumulated information about hundreds of millions of people. There is a Search Records part of the site that lets you see if there is information about your ancestors.

<http://tinyurl.com/5ezfy9>

You can search for your ancestors name in several types of groups of records.

- Ancestral File
- Census
- International Genealogical Index
- Pedigree Resource
- Social Security Death Index

The National Archives and Records Administration is responsible for the gathering and preservation of United States federal government records. This agency is often referred to by its initials, NARA.

<http://aad.archives.gov/aad/>

NARA has a lot of information about members of the US military forces

Casualties <http://tinyurl.com/5j3tt9>

Military Records <http://tinyurl.com/654x96>

- WWII Enlistment
- WWII Prisoners of War
- WWII Enlistment Records
  - Regular
  - Reserve

NARA has entered into an agreement with Footnote to digitize NARA's holdings.

[www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com)

You have to pay to look at this information. But, Footnote's prices are reasonable and they make it easy to cancel your subscription. They have some items that you can access for free, but the you have to pay for the good stuff.

For example they have WWII Missing Air Crew Reports available for searching and downloading.

These documents give detail information about crashes of the US Army Air Force.

I have accumulated over 40,000 digital images. Organizing these images is a monumental task. It is made easier with a digital image manager that Google makes available for free.

Picasa 3.0 Beta <http://picasa.google.com/>

The first thing Picasa does after being loaded onto your PC is to search your hard disks for any photos or movies.

Picasa allows you to tag individual files with additional information. This makes it easy to find your favorite files. Picasa also has a simple photo editor that can work miracles with photos of their less-than-perfect.

Picasa has a feature that allows you to create a movie of your digital images and videos. You can build a sophisticated slide show of your images. You can also upload these movies to You Tube which is a popular Internet web site for videos.

You can upload your images to PicasaWeb Albums web site. The site has an incredibly unique free tool that will actually recognize faces of people the photos you upload. The first time you upload a photo of individuals, you associate a name with the individual faces. Picasa Web Albums will recognize these identified faces on other photos you load.

I hope this give you some ideas of where you can find information on the Internet.

## How Do I Get Started

At a genealogy meeting, I was talking to a person who was just starting to research their family history and they spoke the words that strikes fear into every experienced genealogist. "I won't ..... I am going to wait until I am ready"

Why does this comment strike fear into the hearts of genealogists? With all the delicacy of a sledgehammer, it's because of death. Everybody is going to die. That aged local historian who has all the information you need for your research might die before you are ready to interview them. That favorite aunt or uncle, who would have thoroughly enjoyed seeing your research, could pass on before you are ready to share your information. How much research has ended up in a dumpster when the genealogist died because the genealogist was not quite ready to publish their information?

The concept of waiting until you are ready is a curious one. No matter how much time you have spent researching or research skills you have learned, you will never be ready. There is never a point at which a light bulb goes on and you can say I understand everything and I am ready.

**The fear of not being ready is due to not knowing what you don't know. If you knew what you did not know, you would know what questions to ask.**

OK, how you find out what you don't know? You read everything you can. This reading will allow you to gain a better understanding of vocabulary used in research and you should get additional ideas for your own research projects.

It is extremely important that you hang around other genealogists who have various levels of experience. Attend conferences and workshops where you can learn from experts. Join several genealogy societies. By attending every meeting you can, you can advance your knowledge of how to research. Personally I can always count on learning a new concept at every meeting, conference and workshop I attend.

Let's look at specific reasons why new researchers won't do things because they are afraid that they are not ready.

**"I won't go to the Wisconsin Historical Society Library to research."**

[www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org)

This is one of the top five genealogical historical libraries in United States. It can be intimidating to ponder all the resources that this Library has.

Many new researchers are afraid of wasting the time of librarians with their stupid questions. They are even more intimidated when they find out that these librarians are nationally known experts.

This is one thing that you don't have to be afraid of. These librarians love nothing better than to spend hours helping you research. Most of these librarians are part detective and they love to solve mysteries. From a practical standpoint, these librarians know that their job depends on how many people they serve.

You can prepare yourself for a visit to The Wisconsin Historical Society Library in Madison Wisconsin by spending a couple hours looking at their web page and online catalogs.

I have prepared a pamphlet that describes what the Library has in how to use it. This pamphlet will be very useful to first-time visitors to the Library.

**I won't start entering data into a genealogy program.**

Many new genealogists are afraid of not entering data into a program like PAF or FamilyTreeMaker because they don't know enough to do it right. Based on my experience, it is impossible to do it right. Assume that you are going to do it wrong and you will fix it later.

The biggest error you can make is recording the source of your facts incompletely. Problems of incorrectly recording sources can be solved by making a copy of every document you look at. Digital cameras are great for making these copies. I never rely upon notes I've entered into a genealogy program. Every experienced genealogist has had the experience of taking another look at a document years later, only to

find a vital piece of information that was hiding in plain sight on the document.

### **“I won’t spend a lot of money on technological equipment.”**

The fear of spending money on computer stuff only to have a cheaper, new and improved version to come out six months later plagues everybody.

Genealogical research is very difficult to do without a computer and access to the Internet. If you are a Luddite, you need to resign yourself to the fact that you need to become a geek.

Here is my recommended shopping list of the technology stuff you need to have.

- laptop
- second monitor
- digital camera
- personal digital assistant
- external hard drive

### **I won’t use the Internet.**

Many people are intimidated by the Internet. They do not know where to look or how to look.

Here are Internet web sites that I guarantee will yield useful information.

#### **GOOGLE [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)**

This is the mother of all search engines. You enter the name of something you are searching information about and the search engine returns thousands of possible places to look.

#### **ANCESTRY [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)**

Not everything on the Internet is free. Ancestry.com is one of the better places to spend your money looking for information. To save a few dollars, you can access parts of Ancestry.com for free at your local library

#### **LINKPENDIUM <http://www.linkpendium.com/>**

This site provides easy access to over 7 million web sites that are grouped by geographic location; state and county. This site requires periodic revisiting to see what they have added.

#### **HaasGenFind <http://tinyurl.com/6sj3l>**

This is my attempt at providing access to a wide range of web sites. You put in the names of people and places, and select up to three counties in Wisconsin. My web site will then give you a boatload of sites to click on.

### **I won’t use the resources of the LDS church? [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)**

I have to admit to my own prejudices.

When I started researching my family I thought what could the LDS church (Mormons) have on my Catholic ancestors from Bavaria Germany?

Being familiar with the enthusiastic missionary efforts of the LDS church, I was concerned about being subjected to hard-core conversion efforts.

The LDS church has information on almost everybody. They have had microfilm crews in Europe since the 1930s. Amazingly, they allow almost free access to their holdings to everybody regardless of religious beliefs.

I have been at local Family History Centers and the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. There has never been even a hint of an effort to bring up a discussion of religion.

The LDS church is tremendous source of data which can be browsed using their online catalogs.

The LDS church’s web site provides free access to excellent how-to guides. This can save you thousands of dollars on books

### **I won’t organize my data.**

After a few months of researching your family history, even an experienced genealogist will generate a lot of paper.

New researchers might be leery of trying to attack the monumental task of organizing their information. One of the problems is that there is no one right way to organize your data. If you ask three people how to organize data, you are likely to get three distinct methods.

My method is to scan and digitize every scrap of information and books that I use in my research. It is a great feeling to be able to hold all of my research on an external hard disk in the palm of my hand.

I also have created an index of the stuff I have. **If you don't have an index, you have an unusable mess.**

### **I won't share my information.**

A true genealogist wants to share their information.

Some people want to wait to share their information until they have gathered every piece of information available and they have a nicely bound book. This is a fool's errand because you will never have gathered every piece of information nor is it possible to create the perfect book. While you are trying to come up with the perfect book, people who are anxiously waiting your information will die. Don't wait until tomorrow, tomorrow might never come.

Unfortunately you have to be careful with whom you share your information. There are jerks out there.

I come from a small town where everybody is related and could benefit from my research. I copied thousands of images onto five CDs which I sold for \$20. Somebody asked for my information and I told them I was selling these disks. This guy proved he was a jerk when he angrily demanded any information I had about his relatives because he had a right to them as a relative. His demand ignored the fact that I spent thousands of dollars and hours accumulating this information. This guy is on my "never talk to them again" list.

I have heard stories of people putting their research out onto free web sites only to find somebody else has downloaded that information and claim it to be their own. There's not much you can do about this. At some point in time you will want to put your information on the Internet. Once it's on the Internet everybody has free access to.

I have heard stories of people researching the same family line making contact. They agree to share their data. One of the researchers freely gave all of the stuff to the other researcher. When it came time for the other researcher to share his stuff, he proved he was a jerk because he said "my information is not ready to be shared

yet". The solution is to not share all of your information at one time. Share a few pieces to begin with so you can establish a relationship.

The most offensive thing you can say to a genealogist is "Give me everything you have". Sure you want to have everything they have, but be more creative. Ask them if they have an index that you can look at. This allows you to ask for the really good stuff now and gives a list of things you can ask for the future once you've established a good relationship.

Eventually you will want to put your information out on an Internet web site. One reason is as a good genealogist you will want to share your information. The primary reason I have my stuff on an Internet web site is that I use it as bait to attract fellow researchers. My web site has put me in contact with researchers that have stuff I like get my hands on.

### **I won't go to my local library.**

Local libraries are an overlooked resource.

I enjoy researching in my pajamas at midnight while watching Texas hold-em poker. My local library provides free access to some tremendous databases that I can use at home.

NewspaperArchive is one of those collections of data that I use at home. NewspaperArchive has digitized newspapers from throughout the United States and the world. There is extraordinary coverage of information, even my small hometown village is covered.

[www.newspaperarchive.com](http://www.newspaperarchive.com)

**I will finish with a strong recommendation that you find a mentor.** One-on-one assistance from somebody who has "been there and done that" can jumpstart your research projects.

Don't give a potential mentor a reason not to help you. Don't make helping you seem like a job for your mentor. Show your gratitude in the right way. Sometimes offering a kind-hearted computer geek money can be offensive to the geek. Seriously, offering the geek a home-cooked meal or some sugary dessert can make the geek happy and willing to visit you on a regular basis.