

PLAIN HISTORY GENEALOGY GROUP

Covering Plain, Sauk Co, Wisconsin and Beyond

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http://tinyurl.com/4rrfv http://tinyurl.com/66w3vNewsletter Table of Contents
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http://garyhaas.blogspot.comStuff I Find Interesting BLOG
http://tinyurl.com/at9w8Online Searchable Index
http://tinyurl.com/22e2uaLoreto, Sauk Co, Wis

Vol 48 April 2009

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Meeting & Events Schedule

Internet and Goodies

Genealogy-Blogs.org directory Genealogy Blogs
Wisconsin Local History & Biography Articles
WIGLHR Genealogy and Local History Sites
Libraries on the Web - Germany & Central Europe
1914 County Maps by State

99 ways to make your computer blazingly fast

Sauk County Historical Society - NEW SITE

Old Franklin Township Historical Society, Plain, WI

Genealoger - German Genealogy Resource Sites

WHS Detectives Investigate Drinking in Delavan &

Oconto 1917-1918

Google Newstimeline

Ancestry Magazine - Free Online Version

Buying a New Computer

Setting up Your Web Browser

Using TinyUrl with ZoneAlarm

Researching WWI Veterans

Ludwig Haas in WWI

Meeting & Events Schedule

Saturday, May 9, 2009

9:30 am, Plain, WI

Kraemer Library and Community Center

We will discuss researching military history.

The focus will be on researching an individual soldier's activities in WWI, the Badger Powder Plant and WWII. There is a tremendous amount of information available to researchers.

Many of the data sources we will discuss are free and available through the Internet.

Everybody is welcome.

Internet and Goodies

Genealogy-Blogs.org directory Genealogy Blogs

genealogy-blogs.org/newspaper-genealogy-columns/

Blogs are a great information of new and wondrous things happening in an area. This website has links to some great genealogical blogs.

Wisconsin Local History & Biography Articles

www.wisconsinhistory.org/wlhb/articleSearchAdv.asp

The Wisconsin State Historical Society Library gives you free access to a searchable database of articles about Wisconsin history.

WIGLHR Genealogy and Local History Sites

<http://www.wla.lib.wi.us/wiglhr/local.html>

This is another collection of websites that you can use to do geological and historical research in Wisconsin.

Libraries on the Web - Germany & Central Europe

<http://lists.webjunction.org/libweb/central.html>

Libraries are a great place research. If you're researching German ancestors, German libraries are great place to look.

1914 County Maps by State

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~shastaca/m>

Maps are a great way to get a better understanding of where our ancestors lived

99 ways to make your computer blazingly fast

<http://helpdeskgeek.com/windows-xp-tips/99-ways-to-make-your-computer-blazingly-fast/comment-page-1/>

Your computer can never run too fast.

Sauk County Historical Society - NEW SITE

<http://saukcountyhistory.org/home.html>

The Sauk County Historical Society's website a new look. This is a great site to spend an afternoon exploring what's available.

Old Franklin Township Historical Society, Plain, WI

<http://www.townoffranklinhistoricalsociety.com/index.html>

This organization has a tremendous amount of facts and other documents on people from the Plain area. Be sure to make a visit to the old town Hall during the end of July 2009 three-day fireman celebration.

Genealoger - German Genealogy Resource Sites

http://www.genealoger.com/german/ger_general_sites.htm

This is a good collection of websites that can be used to research our German ancestors.

WHS Detectives Investigate Drinking in Delavan & Oconto 1917-1918

<http://wisconsinhistory.org/turningpoints/search.asp?id=1703>

This website has an interesting look at of "blind pig" cases (illegal sales of liquor). This looks like interesting reading.

Google Newstimeline

<http://newstimeline.googlelabs.com/>

This is a neat way to review history in a chronological format. A person could spend days or months exploring.

Ancestry Magazine - Free Online Version

<http://www.ancestrymagazine.com/archives/>

a good researcher is always looking for a source of information that can be used as inspiration to finding solutions to research problems. This is one of those sources.

Buying a New Computer

I want to buy a new computer, but like many people I am confused by all the options and choices. Here is how I am dealing with this confusion.

If you only use your computer for e-mail and browsing websites, you do not need to read this article. Any cheap computer will meet your needs.

Do I need a new computer? My current laptop is over four years old and doesn't run as fast as I would like it to. If your computer is over two years old, any new computer will run much faster. It will have a newer and faster processor, and most importantly, it will have more memory.

Avoid buying a computer loaded with Windows Vista. This is a terrible operating system.

It is slow. It won't work with all of your printers and hardware. This is not the first time that Microsoft has tried to get us to buy a lousy product. Most computer geeks remember Windows ME or BOB.

Wait until the fall of 2009? Microsoft is in the process of testing a new operating system called Windows 7. The reports on this testing have been positive. Optimists expect Windows 7 to be ready between August and October 2009. You might want to wait until then.

Windows 7 for free. Microsoft has confused the issue by announcing that on May 5th, they will allow anybody to download Windows 7 for free and use it for a year without having to buy a license.

The benefit to downloading Windows 7 for free is that I can buy a new computer now.

The downside is that within a year I will have to spend between \$200 and \$300 for a license to Windows 7. There is also a very good chance that I will have to do a complete reload of all my software when I buy this license.

I will be taking a week-long vacation around Memorial Day and will probably buy and setup a new laptop then. I use my computer at least two hours a day. Anything that is faster will save me time, and I place a high value on my time.

I will not buy a Macintosh computer. It is my opinion that Macintosh computers are not inherently easier to use than Windows-based computers. Computers are difficult to use for many people because they do not understand the concepts of drives, folders, files and because they don't have a positive attitude. A bigger problem is, who are you going to go to if you need help? There are very few Macintosh geeks to ask questions.

I will buy a laptop. Laptops are almost as powerful as desktops, but you can take them with you wherever you go. A big benefit of having a laptop is you can get help with problems easier. Many times people have asked me to help them with their computer problems without any luck. The only way that I can give help is when I'm sitting right in front of the computer. A laptop allows you to bring the problem to a geek.

How big should my laptop be? New laptops are powerful, with full-size keyboards. This makes them a lot larger. My preference is to buy a smaller piece of equipment. It is important to me that my laptop will be easy to move around.

I will use a second monitor. This is hard to understand unless you see it in action. I will never use a computer without a second monitor; the benefits are just too great. If you don't have a 19 inch LCD monitor lying around, you can get one very cheaply.

I will use an external wireless keyboard. One of the problems with laptops is that their keyboards are too small. For about \$40 you can get a full-sized external keyboard. **I try to reduce the number of cables** hooked up to my computer whenever I can.

I will use an external wireless mouse. I have never gotten used to the built-in touchpad on laptops. An external wireless mouse is my best choice. I use a Logitech VX Revolution mouse, because it allows me to do a lot of things with one click. This saves me a second here and there, because I don't have to type on the keyboard or navigate through several levels on the menu. These fractions of a second and up and can make your computer seem quicker.

My mouse has 7-customizable buttons that allow me to do the following without removing my hand from my mouse:

- Scroll up and down on a page.
- Increase or decrease font size on a webpage.
- Go back to the previous webpage
- Bookmark a webpage.
- Google search on highlighted text

I will load my next computer with as much memory as I can afford. The more memory your computer has the faster it will work. My next computer will have at least 4 GB of memory.

I will use an external hard disk. Built in hard disks are never big enough and they lock your data into one piece of hardware. External hard disks allow you to take your data wherever you go and make backing up your data easy. It also saves you the task of having to transfer your data to a new machine. I will use the laptop's hard disk to backup up my data.

Where will I buy it? You can **buy it from a store.** The benefit is that you will have a place to easily return the PC if something is wrong with it. The problem is that you will have a smaller selection to choose from and will have difficulty upgrading it to a better processor or more memory.

You can **buy it online.** I am fan of the HP Pavilion line of laptops. I went to their website and was able build a PC that had the levels of processing speed and memory that I was looking for and the price I wanted to spend. I will be able to save a few dollars by not choosing the software like Norton antivirus software that is pre-loaded and included in the store's price. The benefit is I get what I want. The downside is getting the laptop repaired if needed.

In the next newsletter, we will discuss how to get ready for a new computer and how to set up a new computer.

Setting up Your Web Browser

Your web browser gives you access to the Internet, which is the world's greatest tool. Why use an underpowered web browser when you can tune up a browser into a slick, easy to use research machine.

Firefox 3.0.9 is a free web browser, which makes a good starting point for a tuning up you access to the Internet. I prefer Firefox to Microsoft's Internet Explorer, because it is easier to find nifty free tools.

<http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/>

Loading existing bookmarks and favorites is the first step to using Firefox web browser.

There are a couple of ways to load existing bookmarks from the menu bar.

- File ----> Import
- Bookmarks ----> Organize Bookmarks

The following are some of the things I have added to my browser to tune it up.

A button to translate webpages in foreign languages into English.

The following is quick guide on how to install this button on your browser's toolbar

- http://translate.google.com/translate_tools?hl=en
- *Look for Get 1-click translations from your browser's toolbar*
- *Drag-and-drop the English button to your browser's toolbar*

FonxLingo 2.3.2 - This tool allows you to translate individual words and phrases on a webpage. It is a special tool because it will can Latin into English

GooglePreview 3.19 – This adds thumbnails of websites to results when you are searching using Google

Locator 3.020080730 – This allows you to highlight an address on a webpage, and with a right-click bring it up in Google maps.

Hyperwords 5.3 - . This allows you to highlight a word on a webpage and do a quick lookup using Google, Wikipedia and a number of other search websites.

The place to look for the above and other add-ons is : <https://addons.mozilla.org/>

Zoho Notebook Helper 1.0b5 – Many times I find something on a webpage that I want to make a note of. Printing out the webpage or making a bookmark of the site doesn't work with my method of note taking. This program allows me to highlight and save only the portion of the webpage that I'm interested in to a separate website.

<http://notebook.zoho.com/>

FireTune – There are lots of hidden options to speed up Firefox. This program will do it for you automatically

<http://www.totalidea.com/product.php?Product=FireTune>

Firefox also has a bookmark toolbar, which gives one click access to the websites you often use. Here are the some of the websites I have on my bookmark toolbar

<http://mail.yahoo.com>

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

http://translate.google.com/translate_s?hl=en

<http://tinyurl.com/>

<http://garylhaas.web.aplus.net/HaasGenFind.php>

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

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

A tuned-up web browser can make doing on-line research easier and more successful. You only have a limited supply of energy and brain-power. I prefer to use my supply on actual research instead of having to spend time typing and making menu selections.

Using TinyUrl with ZoneAlarm

Tiny URL is a website that compresses large web addresses that you can't remember into a short, easy to remember address. However, Zone Alarm blocks access to TinyURL for a good security reason. These short easy to remember addresses could have you open up a website that will take control of your computer. I only click on Tiny URLs that I know I can trust.

Here is how you set up Zone Alarm to allow TinyUrl's to work

- Right click on the Z icon on Windows Status Bar
- Restore ZoneAlarm Security Suite Control Center
- Click on Anti-Virus/spyware
- Click on Spy Site Blocking
- Click on Access column for TinyUrl.com
- Set Access to Allow

Researching WWI Veterans

I never talked to my grandfather about his experiences World War I. He is no longer around to answer my research questions. This article will describe how I researched my grandfather's military career.

An important first step is to **find the unit(s) or division(s)** that your ancestor was assigned to. Let's look at some of the sources of information that are available.

Tombstones. Many tombstones have some indication of military history. This is an easy place to start. However, just because the information is written in stone, doesn't mean that it is useful.

Draft Registration. In 1917 and 1918, 24 million man living United States had to register for the draft. Three different registration cards were used. These registration cards contained the following information:

	Jun 5 1917	July 5 1918	Sep 12 1918	
Ages covered	21-31	>21	18-45	
Name	X	X	X	
Home Address	X	X	X	
Birth Date	X	X	X	
Citizenship	X	X	X	
Birth Place	X			
Country of Citizenship	X	X		
Occupation	X			
Employer / Where	X	X	X	
Dependents	X			
Marital Status	X			
Prior Military Service	X			
Draft Exemption Claimed	X			
Height	X	X	X	
Color Eyes, Hair, Bald	X	X	X	
Disability	X	X	X	
Father's Birthplace		X		
Race		X	X	
Age			X	
Nearest Relative		X	X	

The card used for the June 1917 registration appears to have more personal information. I've seen registration cards with the military service being with the German army in the late 1800s. Even if your ancestors did not serve in World War I, you should look for their draft registration card for what could be interesting information.

Military Insurance. This document does not show a great deal of personal information. It shows a soldier's name, the date the insurance became effective and the amount of coverage

Discharge Record. This document, you can get the soldier's name, some of the units he served in, place of birth, age, civilian occupation, color of eyes, color of hair, complexion and height. It also shows the place and date of the discharge.

Enlistment Record. You can get a lot of information from this document

Name	Rank
Prior Service	Marksmanship
Battles	Vocation
Physical Condition	Wounds Received
Marital Status	Character
Remarks	
Date & Place Inducted / Enlisted	

World War I Service Statement Cards. I've saved the best place to determine the unit your ancestor belonged to for last. In 1919 the U.S. Congress passed an act directing the US Dept. of War to compile a summary of each World War I veteran's wartime record and provide this information to each state. In addition to these service statement cards, some states paid bonuses to their World War I veterans so you should look for a bonus payment card. A good place to look for these service statement cards is the state's department of veterans' administration or the state historical archives. If you are really lucky, your ancestor's cards might be on the Internet.

These cards contain information about:

Name	Serial Number	Race
Residence	Enlistment/Induction Place, Date	
Date, Place Birth	Organizations served with	
Grades	Engagements	
Wounds	Dates Served Overseas	
Discharge Date	Disabilities	

With the unit number you are now ready to start your document search. Here are some places to

look for information about your World War I ancestor's military service.

Order of Battle. This is the definitive set of books on the activities of US military units in World War I. The activities of every unit are covered in unbelievable detail. You can find the location and information about the training camp. You can find information about each battle the unit was a part of. This three volume set of books is available at many large libraries. I purchased a digital version of this reference set on CD disc.

Google. Once you have determined the unit your ancestor was in, the **Google** Internet search engine is a great place to start.

Careful. When searching for documents, watch out for these items.

Great War vs WWI. Do not limit your searches to pages containing only World War I. The war did not give his name until World War II started. Don't forget AEF, American Expeditionary Forces.

Unit numbers. Today the units number, you need to know what type the unit was. Was it the 344th sanitary unit? Was the 344th medical unit? Was it the 344th infantry unit?

Be sure to check out all of Google especially:
www.google.com www.images.google.com
www.books.google.com

Unit Histories. Part of your research of World War I veterans should involve looking for histories of the units that your ancestor was part of. The histories can give you an incredible amount of information describing:

- Life at the training camp
- Traveling to Europe
- Places seen in Europe
- Activities of the unit in Europe

Local Newspapers. Do not overlook local newspapers for information about your World War I soldier's movements during the war. They can be a gold mine in identifying what a person was doing, where he was doing it, and when he did.

Images. There are thousands of images of soldiers, camps, troop transport and battles.

Ludwig Haas in WWI

The objective of my research is to gather information about my grandfather's World War I experiences to publish in a pamphlet.

I started my research of my grandfather's military history with very little information. I never had any direct conversations with my grandfather about anything, let alone his military history.

I have heard three stories about my grandfather:

- My grandfather and Alois Gruber spent the night in a French wine cellar
- My grandfather was hospitalized.
- My grandfather purchased a radio, with his World War I bonus

I got my first piece of information by looking at the military plaque on the back of my grandfather's **tombstone**. It showed he was a private in the U.S. Army and had served in Company K of the 312th Infantry.

Next I looked at documents my father has.

Ludwig Haas applied for a **military insurance** policy with a \$10,000 death benefit and a \$57.50 monthly benefit in the case of permanent disability.

His **discharge record** showed that he was honorably discharged on April 3, 1919 at Camp Dodge. There is also a stamp on the document showing that it was inspected by the Wisconsin Service Recognition Board and my grandfather was entitled to an \$84.33 bonus.

It showed that he was inducted or enlisted on July 22, 1918 at Baraboo, Wisconsin. He had not achieved a marksmanship rating. Nor was he rated on his horsemanship. He was not wounded in service. His physical condition was good when he was discharged and he had an excellent character.

The records show that he left the US on September 9, 1918, and returned to the US on March 11, 1919.

There is a stamp on the document that he was paid \$108.45 on April 3, 1919 at Dodge, Iowa. Another stamp shows that he was allowed

passage on the inter-urban Railway to Baraboo Wisconsin, also on the April 1919.

My next research stop was at the Wisconsin State Historical Society Library in Madison Wisconsin. I checked the ARCAT online catalog and found that the actual draft registration cards for Sauk County Wisconsin were in the archives room.

<http://tinyurl.com/saukdraftwwi>

Today, you can look at draft registration cards for the entire United States on ancestry.com. However the quality of the images on ancestry.com is not easily read.

While in the archives room at the Discusses Historical Society Library I looked at the microfilm copies of the World War I service / bonus records. This was the mother lode of information. More importantly, I have a high level of confidence that this information is accurate, based on its sources.

<http://tinyurl.com/wibonuswwi>

A key part of researching somebody is to know what they did, when they did it, where they did, and if you are lucky why they did it. With these dates and facts, I started a search of the local newspapers for articles about my grandfather. I started with the middle of July 1918.

I found an article in the local newspaper describing the induction of my grandfather and his leaving on the train from Baraboo to Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois. According to the article, following local men were among the 182 Sauk County inductees sent to **Camp Grant**.

Giles Lovesee	John Meister
Jacob Fischer	E.B. Schwartz
Andrew Yankee	Fred Grauvogl
Paul Haas	Walter Smith
Edward Ederer	Alwin Leutcher
John Severson	Archie Prouty
Alois J. Gruber	Edwin Korb
Ludwig Haas	Milton McCreedy
Albert Alt	Anthony Roessler
Andrew Hackbush	Edward Scholl
Frank Hank	Wm. Campbell
George Loekman	Geo.W. Daniels
Harry Peterson	

The article also lists the following who left for **Camp Greenleaf** on Wednesday morning

Gustav Federman	Simon E. Blau
Earl LaBounty	Ludwig Alt
August Schlieckau	

There was another article stating that my grandfather's parents and his brother John made the trip to Camp Grant to visit him for a few days of August 1918.

Next, I looked for information in the World War I research bible, the Order of Battle. I got good background information on the 334th infantry unit that my grandfather along to.

I now have enough information to start a detailed Internet search.

I could've focused on Company K., of the 312 infantry unit based on the tombstone and gathered books of information. But I would've gotten very little information about my grandfather.

A key part of research is to analyze information from a variety of sources, and to come up with an opinion as to its accuracy. I like to base my opinion on how well newly discovered facts mesh with what I think I already know. How one resolves what appears to be inconsistent data is a measure of the researcher's skill level.

Now the fun begins. I am now ready to do effective Google searches. I focused on searches using the terms 344th, Camp Grant, and 86th division. On Google books, I found the crown jewel of my research.

"The Official History of the 86th Division" published in 1921. <http://tinyurl.com/dx8erd>

The book contains many details about the kind of experiences my grandfather would've gone through. The book was not a simple list of dates, places and times. It contained information that allows the reader to get an understanding of what was going through the soldiers' minds.

The most important information this book was a detailed list of soldiers then went to Europe with a division in September 1918. The names were arranged by units and companies and included the soldier's name, his rank, and his place of residence. Unfortunately, the names are not listed alphabetically. The names were listed in the same order as they were in the passenger lists.

The hardest part of any research project is to add meaning to the facts that you have gathered. I find putting the facts into a time-line order a good way to summarize what I think I know, and put them into some sort of context. Here is a summary of the key information I have gathered so far.

Monday	Jun 1, 1896	Lute Haas born
Sunday	Jun 14, 1896	Lute Haas baptized as James Louis Haas
Tuesday	Jun 5, 1917	registered for the draft
Sunday	May 12, 1918	cyclone hits Plain, WI
Monday	Jul 22, 1918	inducted into the Army - 161 Dep Brig
Monday	Jul 29, 1918	transferred to Co B 344th Infantry 172nd Infantry Brigade 86th Division
Thursday	Aug 1, 1918	purchased insurance
????	Aug ?, 1918	visited by parents, brother at Camp Grant
Thursday	Aug 8, 1918	orders send division to Hoboken, New Jersey
Thursday	Aug 8, 1918	Camp Grant closed to visitors
Thursday	Aug 18-25, 1918	troop moves to embarkation ports 2 day trip majority of units proceeded to Camp Mills
Monday	Sep 9, 1918	boarded Northumberland for Europe
Saturday	Sep 21-22, 1918	arrives in England Liverpool march to Knotty Ash "rest camp" entrained to Romsey 10 mile hike to Southhampton
Monday	Sep 23, 1918	
	- Oct 1, 1918	Spanish flu effects 4000, 1000 died
????		members 86th div hospitalized in England-flu
Tuesday	Sep 24, 1918	night time troops go to Le Havre & Cherbourg division moves East Bordeaux Area - training Hommes 40 - Chevaux 8 wine-growing district of Medoc in Gironde 344th inf Ambares and St. Louis Montferrand
??????		story of Lute Haas and Alois Gruber spending night in French wine cellar
??????		story of Lute Haas hospitalized - flu ??
Thursday	Oct 3, 1918	86th division ordered to be skeletonized
Friday	Nov 8, 1918	transferred to CO D 4 Provisional Tng Regt
Thursday	Dec 5, 1918	transferred to Company K 312th Infantry
Friday	Dec 20, 1918	brother George dies, related to tonsils
Tuesday	Mar 11, 1919	Ludwig Haas returns from Europe
Thursday	Apr 3, 1919	discharged from Camp Dodge, Iowa
????		received \$84.33 bonus purchased a radio

Now the fun part begins, adding flesh to the skeleton of information I have gathered, writing a history of my grandfather in World War I including photos.