

# G-SIG FORUM #46

...from the German Special Interest Group. G-SIG is an effort of the St. Louis Genealogical Society ([www.stlgs.org/](http://www.stlgs.org/)) and the German American Heritage Society, St. Louis, Mo. ([www.gahs-stlouis.org](http://www.gahs-stlouis.org)).

This communication is a forum for genealogical, educational, and historical information with fresh insights and ideas on German traditions and ancestry. Gerald Perschbacher serves as *FORUM* compiler and coordinator.

If you would like to include a notice or request, please submit your information in condensed form for the *EXCHANGE!* section (limit 50 words). *EXCHANGE!* notices run only once, but you may resubmit. We reserve the privilege to shorten and edit. Send your *EXCHANGE!* submission to [persch3@hotmail.com](mailto:persch3@hotmail.com).

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## ATTENTION, RESEARCHERS!

This is truly worth a reminder! If you haven't checked into it since the previous edition of *G-SIG FORUM*, then NOW is the time. **The Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center** contains handy resources for researching family history. You can even search the history of the house in which you live! Begin with the expanding [Genealogy and Local History Index](#) or consult the [Family History--Get Started](#) page. **Dennis Northcott**, an associate archivist at the research library, says, "You will find catalogs, guides, and indexes to the collections. Visit our [Genealogy Links](#) page for links to Web sites that may help you locate information on your St. Louis ancestors." To receive the museum's *Genealogy and House History News*, contact Mr. Northcott at [dnp@mohistory.org](mailto:dnp@mohistory.org).

I tried some of the options and truly liked them.

A variety of options are running on the Genealogy and Local History Index. To make a search, visit the [main page](#) and browse.

If you are in the mood to check further sites, **Dave Lossos** has compiled quite an impressive listing of Web helps for researchers. You may wish to check his progress (and see how it helps in your work) by spending some time investigating: <http://genealogyinstlouis.accessgenealogy.com/mhs.htm>

Further research is encouraged by the **Four Rivers Genealogical Society**. It covers all of Franklin County, Mo. While there are other organizations covering smaller areas, the Four Rivers effort takes a broad approach. Check

[http://washmohistorical.org/Four\\_Rivers\\_Genealogical\\_Society.htm](http://washmohistorical.org/Four_Rivers_Genealogical_Society.htm)

Information about **Catholic sources and congregational options** may be reached by using the substantial listing for parishes in the entire St. Louis area: [http://www.archstl.org/index.php?option=com\\_adir&task=list&cat1=1&Itemid=80](http://www.archstl.org/index.php?option=com_adir&task=list&cat1=1&Itemid=80)

As a G-SIG participant, you can look forward to many productive hours of discovery at these and other notable sites. If you have other Web sites, museums, collections, or research options you would like to share with others in G-SIG, announce your ideas at a G-SIG Gathering or e-mail the ideas to me at [persch3@hotmail.com](mailto:persch3@hotmail.com) for possible inclusion in the *G-SIG FORUM*. GP

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## WHEN JIM CAME CALLING

By Gerald Perschbacher

When **Jim Doerr** came to a G-SIG Gathering with his wife, little did he know what to expect. He heard a presentation, watched individuals provide updates on their findings, discovered the advances of Clusters, and more. But how much more, he never anticipated!

I introduced myself to Jim after the formal portion of the evening. “Are you related to Hans in Dieburg, Hessen-Darmstadt, Germany?” I asked. Jim did not know the person. I countered with several questions about Jim’s German heritage, then invited him to accompany me to my office. Outside my door is a mural of pictures I took on a recent trip to Germany, one showing researcher Hans Doerr (the “e” implies there was an umlaut over the “o,” which is the original manner of writing the surname).

“There is a striking physical resemblance between the two of you,” I observed. Jim agreed. Then I added, “Since you say your family originated from that area, it is very possible that Hans is a distant cousin of yours!”

Jim checked with family expert Bob Doerr. Then a phone call came my way. “Yes, Hans and I ARE related,” Jim said, excited over the connection.

The way I understand the story, Bob and some others took a trip to Dieburg about one year after I last visited the area. Bob discovered there was a picture of an ancestor in a church in the area and wanted to see it. He was told to come back the next day. When he did, there was Hans, ready to welcome them inside and converse with his distant American relatives!

Jim and a brother-in-law shared this update with me in a little visit that became a two-hour discussion of what each of us and some others had discovered. During that time I was conversant about Hans and the old Doerr roots in

Germany, how life was lived over the centuries, and much more. For Jim, it was a trip to a past world he had not visited previously.

Isn't that at the essence of genealogical discovery? Isn't that at the heart of unearthing some little known or perhaps even long forgotten concept or event from the deep past?

As Jim and I concluded our portion of the visit, I revealed another secret. "On my most recent trip to the Old Country, Hans and I were scanning our eyes over numerous pages of old books. Then Hans started laughing. 'You must see!' he nearly shouted. I jumped from my seat and came to his side. 'Here,' he pointed to an entry from the 1700s. 'This is an entry announcing the marriage of a Doerr with a Perschbacher.' Hans paused, then looked up from his chair. 'That makes us cousins!' So, Jim, I guess we have a common bond as strong as blood."

Of course, when families linger in a given area for centuries, it is logical for bloodlines to mingle. Our task is to find those common bonds.

If anyone is interested, Bob Doerr is searching these surnames ([bdoerr@msm.umr.edu](mailto:bdoerr@msm.umr.edu)): **Bokel, Carpentier, Dewes, Doerr/Dorr, Droege, Eggers, Fahley, Fehlig, Ferrara, Grimm, Hafkemeyer, Heumann, Hoffmann, Kaffenberger, Kimpel, Koester, Kretzer, Ludewig, Lunkenheimer, Mieke, Mieth, Obrecht, Schmidt, Wangler, Wunderlich, Zakrzewski, Faeth, Freeman, Hussmann Pieper, Danforth, Geisel, Bergmann, Reifeiss, Fries, Niemeyer**

Maybe he should add **Perschbacher**, too!

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## **SPEAKING OF BOB...**

I haven't met Bob Doerr formally, but I know about his efforts to share findings with others. He has taken the 1845 St. Louis Directory and transcribed pertinent information from its pages. This material is available online at:

<http://www.rollanet.org/~bdoerr/St%20Louis%201845%20Cy%20Dir.htm>

I had researched a microfilm copy of the same book (I believe it was in the collection at the St. Louis Genealogical Society office). It was on microfilm that I saw the entry: "***Perschbacher, Frederick, NE corner 2nd and Vine.***" Yes, he was an ancestor. But I found that Mr. Doerr's entry list showed it, also, and the list could have been accessed from the comfort of my home computer.

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# CHEAP DISCOVERIES

by Gerald Perschbacher

Go to sales specializing in used books. Let me tell you from experience that certain acquisitions can open a world of information on your familial past without costing you as much as a trip to Germany or even as much as a fancy dinner in a swank restaurant.

**For a mere fifty cents** I obtained a 1958 edition of *Der Grosse DUDEN Das Bildwörterbuch der deutschen Sprache* (The Big DUDEN picture-wordbook of the German Language), printed in Germany. To put it mildly, this 700+ page, hardbound book fits nicely in one hand. It is printed in black and white plus a variety of color plates. On nearly every page is a line drawing of a setting with numbers on items. Example: A work desk shows a typewriter, paper, pens, etc. Each has a number alongside. Then the book shows a list of the numbers with the German name for each item. What is particularly helpful, even for a German, is the use of the article “the” (*die, der, das*) preceding each entry. As German friends have told me numerous times, the best way to learn when to use the proper article comes mainly through usage. This book can be a major assist in that process.

But the overall enjoyment of pictures coupled with accurate German names and descriptions is a golden experience. We are creatures of visual learning. It seems easier to equate a word with an object we see, rather than mentally conjuring it. Also, small dictionaries may not carry every word of German, and the language has changed over the centuries. Finding a book half a century old preserves some of those older words that now have fallen out of regular usage.

**For \$1 I became the new owner** of *McGraw-Hill's German-English Science Dictionary*, 1959. Also hardbound with 592 pages, the book carries a seemingly countless list of short entries on the type of specialized words not found in most common German-English dictionaries. It was well worth the miserly expense.

*Castles of Germany*, 1980, a Stars and Stripes Publication, rang up another half-dollar to my tab. Did you know there are more than 20,000 sites of castles and ancient ruins in Germany? Most of them are accessible. This softbound, 192 page book just covers the old West Germany, dedicating one or two pages to each castle featured. Pictures are in black and white. Lots of historical comments are made, also, which helps us appreciate German heritage.

*English Salzburg Guide* (no date, but appearing to come from the 1950s) courtesy of American Express, was a twenty-five cent bargain. The tiny, nearly pocket-size book is filled with color pictures of Salzburg and many informative comments about the area. Since this is in English, most Americans will find it easy to read. If you had a German version, also, you could compare the two to

help strengthen your comprehension of the Old World tongue.

*Cologne Cathedral – A Descriptive and Historical Guide*, paperback, 46 pages, fifty cents, printed in Germany about 1910, with line drawings and photos of major sites, brings a bit of the past to my library. Along with it comes a healthy number of historical highlights and insights.

**Also gleaned from a book sale** was a packet of photographic cards of Potsdam and two maps on Germany and Celtic Europe (which shows what the area of present Germany was like before the Germanic tribes settled there).

All these were purchased in a single hour at one large book sale. You may do as well or even better if you are vigilant. Search the travel section, the foreign language section, and the history area for best results.

You probably won't strain your wallet, either!

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## ‘CELTIC EUROPE...’

...was the title of a map I recently examined, printed in 1977 by National Geographic Society (found at the recent book fair mentioned above). I was drawn to one caption: “Traditionally identified as a completely separate people, the Germanic tribes in fact had close cultural ties with the Celts. The segregation arose from Caesar’s arbitrary decision to divide Europe into the Gallic domain, which he planned to conquer, and the Germanic region, which he preferred to leave alone.”

That’s the first time I had seen such an assertion in print. However, I do not dispute it. If you study ancient Europeans, their cultures, movements, and artifacts, you may be led to the same conclusion.

Consider some simple similarities. Roman descriptions of the Celts who were being displaced in Central and Western Europe more than 2,000 years ago depicted them as blond or red-headed, tall, with fair skin. These are also old Germanic traits.

The Romans used the name “Gaul” for the land of the Celts (who were heavily centered at that time in what is now France, although the Celts previously were centered in what are now Austria and lower Germany). Some students of the subject say *Gallus*, the word from which Gaul was derived, was rooted in the meaning of being powerful, which seems to match Roman documents that say the Celts were tall, strong people (hence, we can conclude the Celts were physically built similar to Germans). *Gallus* may have served as a tribal name, too, for an especially hearty bunch.

Trace the Celtic language to its origin, and experts conclude it sprang from a common language from which German also was derived. The separation in that

common language took place about 4,000 years ago. With the spin-off, tribes moved further away from common religion, cultural practices, and traditions. The Celts adapted certain Roman influences that further changed their language as they traded with Rome, fought its troops, or negotiated for living space.

Long ago I concluded that Celts held pre-Germanic roots, but in time they shifted their traditions away from the common bonds that Germans practiced. If true, it means people of Celtic derivation are distant cousins to Germans.

The Letter to the Galatians is in the Bible. In it, the Apostle Paul addressed the Galatians early in the First Century A.D. Those Galatians had their designation derived from the word *Gallus*, since these were descendants of the Gauls (or Celts!). Now, if you want to know how the ancient Celts thought and acted, you may derive insights from reading that section of the Bible. And if you are convinced the Celts were related to the early Germanic tribes, then you have a glimpse of ancient Germanic thinking, too!

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***EXCHANGE! G-SIG comments, ideas, & requests:***

+ **Liz in Scotland** (nee Mitchell) [elizabethallan721@btinternet.com](mailto:elizabethallan721@btinternet.com) says, "I'm still looking for my German born great-grandfather who became known in Glasgow, Scotland, UK, as Lewis Mitchell. His registration and birth given on his marriage certificate is from Frankfurt am Main, Germany. He married in Glasgow as Lewis Mitchell but apparently was called Louis 'Meesh-ler' ...there were a lot of MISCHLERS in Heppenheim an der Bergstrasse, Dramstadt, Hessen (Hesse), Germany and later I also saw a few in Biblis, Darmstadt, both south of Frankfurt am Main. This suggests that this may have been the surname of my great-grandfather."

+ **Judy Broleman** ([thebrolemans@yahoo.com](mailto:thebrolemans@yahoo.com)) needs ideas on contacting officials in Crimmitschau, Saxony, on the Bodensee and Lake Constance, Baden, and in Kupprichausen near Boxberg, Baden.

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**Want a printed copy of G-SIG FORUM by mail? Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: St. Louis Genealogical Society, Attn. Ed Schmidt; #4 Sunnen Dr., Suite 140; St. Louis, MO 63143. Not yet on the e-mail list for the G-SIG FORUM? Write to [germansig@stlgs.org](mailto:germansig@stlgs.org). (Note: All copyright privileges for this FORUM are reserved by the compiler; no item is to be duplicated or distributed without permission.)**

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**Have great ideas for the G-SIG FORUM? Submit your material to [persch3@hotmail.com](mailto:persch3@hotmail.com) .**

