



Hans Schmidt Family Association

Strategic Plan
2022-2026

Mission

The mission of the Hans Schmidt Family Association is to preserve the family history of the Schmidt Family of the Werra Valley and to spread knowledge of this heritage. We seek to reconnect all descendants of Hans Schmidt (1594-1680), the shepherd of Nentershausen and Blankenbach.

HSFA's Core Values

1. We are, first and foremost, concerned with **true knowledge** of our family history. Although the narratives that we tell about our heritage can and should change over time, these narratives must remain grounded in the primary sources, whether they suggest flattering or unflattering truths.
2. We intend to promote **inclusivity** within our association, in order to maximize participation and connectedness in the family. We want to make all members feel welcome and engaged, without prejudice against age, gender, race, ethnicity, skin color, nationality or national origin, political affiliation or lack thereof, religion or lack thereof, sexual orientation, or disability, and regardless of whether they connect to our family through blood, marriage, common-law, adoptive, step, or foster relationships.
3. We value **creativity, technology, and innovation** in how we preserve and present our family history. We welcome new ideas, different ways of doing things, and the usage of cutting-edge tools and techniques, as long as they help us achieve our goals. We feel this is important for staying relevant to younger generations and continuing to thrive through changing societal conditions.
4. We believe in **continuous quality improvement** in everything we do. We believe in providing ever higher levels of excellence in the services we offer to the public and to our members, with the end goal of delighting and enlightening our users.

HSFA's Vision

The Hans Schmidt Family Association's vision is to be a family association that:

- is financially sufficient and financially stable;
- gives every member of our family a reason to join our association;
- captivates, intellectually stimulates, and appeals to all types of people;
- grounds individuals in their deeper history and gives them a sense of meaning;
- generates and presents robust, thought-provoking historical scholarship;
- keeps pace with changes in technology and society;
- always works to systematically improve;
- is a world-class model for what a family association can be.

Strategic Plan Brief

The Hans Schmidt Family Association started as an unincorporated association in 2017, following the Schmidt family's record-breaking 2016 Iowa reunion. From 2017 to 2022, it was not much more than a website and a Facebook page. It had no registered members, charged no dues, held no meetings, offered no synchronous activities, and had no real officers, apart from Josiah Schmidt who served as webmaster and genealogical researcher. It also had no budget or separate bank account. The first couple of years of website startup fees and research costs were paid from the leftover family reunion funds, per the family reunion committee's dissolution clause. After those funds ran out, Josiah Schmidt paid all website maintenance fees and research costs out-of-pocket himself.

The year 2022 is the first year when the Hans Schmidt Family Association can be said to have become truly active. Josiah recruited a board of directors, who subsequently finalized a constitution and bylaws, authorized setting up a separate bank account, and applied to the IRS for tax-exempt non-profit status. The IRS awarded our organization this status under section 501(c)3, and the association began accepting donations and paid membership dues. We also granted, to a handful of the most committed family history researchers and proponents, the honor of lifetime membership, thereby starting off with a solid base of committed members.

Our primary challenges as a new family association include: the slim financial footing with which a brand-new organization must start, the need to enlarge our rolls of dues-paying members, and the need to offer engaging content and activities that make far-flung distant cousins feel connected to one another and invested in our association. As a new organization, we also have opportunities: we can form our association in the context of, and in response to the needs of, a modern society. Our structure and procedures are not bound by outdated bylaws that were written 50 or 150 years ago. We have the chance to redefine what a family association can be and do, while still retaining the best aspects of what family associations historically have been and done.

Thus, in order to increase revenues, enlarge membership, and expand our service offerings, the Hans Schmidt Family Association is focusing on four strategies over the next four years. These strategic goals are outlined broadly below, with more specific details of execution left to those officers and committee-members who will be responsible for working toward these goals.

Goal #1: Achieve lasting financial stability

Within the next four years, the Hans Schmidt Family Association intends to achieve financial stability by increasing its dues-paying membership roster significantly and generating sufficient yearly revenue from freewill donations to cover expenses and maintain a modest and responsible rainy-day fund. Membership and fundraising drives will take place through online, social media, and print media marketing, and by encouragements made as part of services, activities, and content offered by the association.

Goal #2: Advance collection and preservation projects

Within the next four years, the Hans Schmidt Family Association intends—as part of our Life Stories Project—to collect, transcribe, and digitize as many life stories as is feasible, with an emphasis on those family members born between 1920-1949. Our association also intends—as part of our Online Museum Project—to photograph, catalog, and digitize as many family heirlooms or artifacts for our virtual museum collection as is feasible, with an emphasis on objects owned or used by those ancestors who were born in the 19th century or earlier. Thirdly, our association intends to find and offer Y-DNA tests to multiple new Schmidt men from distant branches of the family to document genetic connections and genetic mutations.

Goal #3: Deepen family members' connection to their heritage

Within the next four years, the Hans Schmidt Family Association intends to offer a wide array of engaging and edifying services, activities, and content to both the general public and to our dues-paying members. In addition to the Life Stories Project, Schmidt DNA Project, and Online Museum mentioned above in Goal #2, we intend to publish more in-depth newsletters that celebrate the accomplishments and milestones of our cousins, offer virtual presentations on our family history, publish texts that clearly explain the important aspects of our family history, and develop online displays and exhibits that showcase our most interesting family history findings.

Goal #4: Cultivate a system that encourages excellence

Within the next four years, the Hans Schmidt Family Association intends to improve the quality of our services and content offerings. Our ultimate goal is user delight. We will be spending these next four years looking for talented, skilled, and motivated volunteers to serve on boards and committees. We want to ensure that we have a system that gives officers and members the information they need, that improves processes without setting arbitrary quotas, that recognizes how each small task moves us toward our larger goals, and that makes the improvement of quality within our association everyone's job.