

Editor's Note: "Researching German Genealogy" is a paper prepared by Nancy Lister. A condensed version of this paper was published in the Winter Issue of *Connecticut Genealogy News* under the title, "Researching German Ancestry." Space limitations in the magazine prevented inclusion of the entire article and of the extensive bibliography. The complete paper is included this "on-line" version.

About the author: Nancy Lister is a genealogist who has retired from teaching Latin and German at Rockville High School. She began her family history search in Cleveland, Ohio while in high school and since then has located her families' backgrounds in Germany and the German family information for many others in the U.S. and in Germany. She has spoken several times in CT. on the subject of research for German ancestors. She holds a B.A. from Ohio Wesleyan, an M.A. in Latin Literature and Classical Civilization from Trinity College in Hartford and is a candidate for the PhD degree in Roman Provincial Archaeology from the University of Passau in Germany.

Researching German Genealogy –Part I

By Nancy Lister

Introduction

Is your name Bower, Snyder, White, Zimmer, Smith, Fox or Wild? Do you assume that your name originated in England? Are you aware that many of these names were German? Or were names changed from German so that your family was acceptable in the United States? Do you know that your family may have been part of a huge immigration from Germany in the middle to the end of the nineteenth century?

German immigrants to the United States are probably the most assimilated of all ethnic groups. Because they so often suffered discrimination, they changed their names to more "American" sounding names. And because the Germans were eager for success in the U.S. they chose every route to become "Americanized". Thus German heritage was often hidden or buried in the records and in the peoples' memories. According to the 2007 *American Community Service Survey*, approximately 362,000 persons in Connecticut claimed German ancestry, about 11% in comparison with the mid-west states where more than half of the population is German.

People from the German speaking areas of the world made up a large percentage of the emigrants to the United States. At the time of the framing of the constitution there was discussion about declaring German the official language of the United States. We can be thankful that we accepted no official language for our country but we can thus understand how important German was in the eighteenth century.

The English-speaking people of the American East Coast made up the largest percentage of those who immigrated until the middle of the nineteenth century; next to the English are the Germans.

Who Is "German"

When we refer to Germans, we must be certain that we understand that German means people who spoke German, but not necessarily people who came from Germany because Germany as a nation did not exist until Bismarck established the nation of Germany in 1871. Prior to that date the word German simply meant ethnic groups of people who spoke not only some type of the German language but who lived in duchies and small kingdoms, such as the Hessians or the Prussians. The victory over other language-speaking peoples gave the German-speaking people not only an ethnic identity but also a language-cohesive identity. These identities did not, however, at any time rule out people thinking themselves Germans and being proud of it. The term German came from the Latin, *Germani*. *Die Deutsche* is the name for the Germans for the last 500 years.

German speaking people came from what is today Belgium, Luxemburg, France, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, the remains of the Holy Roman Empire and peoples of the former Soviet Union and other parts of Europe. These facts have significant impact on family research for the Germans. Not only did family names change so did place names. For example, the town Neuren at the edge of Germany in 1910 is now Nyrska and is a part of the Czech Republic.

When you undertake the process of finding your German ancestors, I should warn you, that you need to be content with a starting point of approximately 1650, the end of the Thirty Years War. That war so devastated the middle of Europe as roving armies traveled back and forth, destroying villages, cities, crops and the countryside to such an extent that most record keeping was lost and many people were dislocated. It is estimated that one third of the population of what was Germany, about 7,000,00 people, died or were killed. You may find a few earlier references in Latin to your family hidden away in church records but they are the exception rather than the rule.

We need to understand what being German means and what Germany looks like today as compared to what it was even 18 years ago. It is my experience that to many people in my grandparents generation being German meant two things: either being a Nazi or being one of those hard working, well trained, stubborn "Krauts" who worked in the heavily industrialized parts of our country to which they or their parents had been recruited. Or perhaps they ran a small farm efficiently and with great pride. Ruling out being Nazis, I would assume that your ancestors were the proud survivors of religious discrimination, political upheaval and dislocation or economic hardships that forced them to leave their homeland. Until 1871 being German basically meant coming from a German speaking land, which could have been lands of modern German, or Austria-Hungary, part of Poland, Russia, Czechoslovakia, (now five small nations) even parts of Bulgaria, Switzerland, Denmark, the Rhineland and the Alsace, now a part of France. For immigrants to the United States and elsewhere to be able to say you were German was a source of great pride, recognition and status.

German Geography

Because of the many boundary changes of the German-speaking peoples, it is important not only to identify the locality in which your ancestor resided, but also to know the name of the political entity where that town is now located. The name of the town may no longer exist on official maps of Germany and may not be recognized officially as any kind of corporate political entity or it may exist only as a *Stadtteil*, part of a larger city. In the late 1960's Germany incorporated many small towns at the edges of cities into the city itself. For example, the town of Rottenbauer that was a village of 800 separate from W_rzburg when my great grandmother left there in 1872. Today it is a *Stadtteil* a section of the city of W_rzburg but it is not shown on a usual map of Germany.

Germany during the Third Reich encompassed parts of Poland, the Sudetenland, Austria, the Netherlands, Bohemia, Moravia, and small areas of Belgium. When W.W. II ended the treaties negotiated by the Allies gave most of the lands that Hitler had conquered back to their own countries. However, our President Truman either did not know or was improperly informed about what the Eastern border on the Oder Neise Rivers meant. In signing the treaty he gave to Poland the so-called Polish corridor. He thought he was bringing the land of present day Poland into Germany and so created the border here.

Immediately after the war, Germany was divided into four districts which were turned over to the winning allied nations, the first district given the Great Britain, the next to France, the third to the U.S. and the fourth to the Soviet Union. When in 1948, the Allies were ready to release their hold on their portions of Germany, the Soviet Union refused and claimed the Northern and Eastern portion of Germany, thus creating, East Germany, which is called the East, the German Democratic Republic, in English the GRD, in German the DDR, the *Deutsche Demokratische Republic* with the capital at East Berlin. The three other parts which the allies had occupied became the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, (*BRD*) or the Federated Republic of Germany, the capital being Bonn.

When you find records for your ancestors that specify a German state or area for their home, you may find that that area no longer exists on a modern map. After the Franco-Prussian war (1871), many former states were amalgamated into larger states; likewise after the Second World War former states were again assumed into larger states. This process happened again after unification in 1991. It will be helpful for you to find your ancestors' historical state and then to find the former capital of the original state. It is most likely that your ancestors' files are in that city's archives.

Here are the states (*Land, state, plural, Länder*) of modern Germany (Germany since 1991) and the historical kingdoms, duchies and divisions of Germany. The city-states of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen contain no additional territories. Some territories are no longer part of Germany. Most of East Prussia (*Ostpreussen*) and *Silesia (Schlesien)* and part of Pomerania (*Pommern*) are now in Poland. Similarly Alsace (*Elsass*) and Lorraine (*Lothringen*) are in France.

The States of Germany

State, Capital

Berlin, capital Berlin

Bremen, capital Bremen

Hamburg, capital Hamburg

Baden-Württemberg; capital Stuttgart

Grand Duchy of Baden, Principality of Hohenzollern, Kingdom of Württemberg.

Bavaria (Bayern); capital Munich

Kingdom of Bavaria (excluding Rheinpfalz), Duchy of Sachsen-Coburg.

Brandenburg; capital Potsdam

Western portion of the Prussian Province of Brandenburg.

Hesse: capital Wiesbaden

Free City of Frankfurt am Main, Grand Duchy of Hessen-Darmstadt (less the province of Rheinhessen), part of the Landgraviate Hessen-Homburg, Electorate of Hessen-Kassel, Duchy of Nassau, District of Wetzlar (part of the former Prussian Rheinprovince), Principality of Waldeck.

Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen); capital Hannover

Duchy of Braunschweig, Kingdom or Prussia, Province of Hannover, Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, Principality of Schaumburg-Lippe.

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; capital Schwerin

Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (less the principality of Ratzeburg), west portion of the Prussian province of Pomerania.

North Rhine-Westphalia (Nord Rhein Westfalen); capital Düsseldorf

Prussian province of Westfalen, northern portion of Prussian Rheinprovince, Principality of Lippe-Detmold.

Rheinland-Palatinate (Rheinland Pfalz); capital Mainz

Part of the Principality of Birkenfeld, Province of Rheinhessen, part of the Landgraviate of Hessen-Homburg, most of the Bavarian Rheinpfalz, part of the Prussian Rheinprovince

Saarland; capital Saarbrücken

Part of Bavarian Rheinpfalz, part of the Prussian Rhein province, part of the principality of Birkenfeld

Sachsen-Anhalt; capital Magdeburg

Former Duchy of Anhalt, Prussian province of Sachsen.

Saxony (Sachsen); capital Dresden

Kingdom of Sachsen, part of the Prussian province of Silesia

Schleswig-Holstein; capital Kiel

Former Prussian province of Schleswig-Holstein, Free City of Lübeck, Principality of Roseburg

Thuringia (Thüringen); capital Erfurt

Duchies and Principalities of Thüringen, part of the Prussian province of Sachsen



Public Document-Published by the Press and Information of the Federal Government-Bonn, 1996.

Researching German Genealogy –Part II

By Nancy Lister

Why They Came

Let us now consider the many waves of German immigration and the reasons for them.

The official beginning of German immigration to the U.S. began in 1683. We know that individual Germans arrived in the New World, at Jamestown, Baltimore, the Carolina's early in our country's history before the date of 1683. Michael Pastorius, was born in Sommerhausen am Main, the town from which my great grandmother took a train to leave home. He had lived in the Frankish area of Germany and then served as minister to a group of Amish-like people on the Upper Rhein. He led a small group of followers to Penn's forest in the ship the "Concord" and arrived in Philadelphia on October 6 of 1683 and established a settlement later called Germantown.

Because he and his people were Deutsch and spoke Deutsch and because the English in Pennsylvania had difficulty saying Deutsch, The English called these settlers the Pennsylvania Deutsch. They should not be confused with the Dutch from the Netherlands. Pastorius's religious tradition (Reformiert) stemmed from Switzerland. These plain people, Anabaptists, followers of the Amish tradition, reformed (Reformiert) were not readily accepted into Germany as they traveled North on the Rhine. The Lutherans and the Catholics (the two dominant religious groups of Germany) disagreed with their religious practices, particularly issues of baptism and the structure of the church. Thus many Germans were forced out of Germany from the end of the 17th century well into the 18th century, primarily for religious reasons.

In 1790 the Palatines, Palatine meaning they came from the Palatinate or the *Pfalz*, settled in Newburg, Orange County, New York. They consisted of 847 families mostly from the Palatinate, Heese-Darmstadt, Hanau, Isenburg and Wetterau areas.

From 1710 on the Mennonites settled throughout Eastern Pennsylvania. 1714 saw Germans into Virginia, in 1709 and afterward onto the coast of Louisiana. In 1732 into Ebenezer Georgia came Salzburgers from Austria. in 1735 Swiss and Germans arrived in South Carolina, 1740 into Waldoboro, Maine, 1804 to Harmony, Pennsylvania, and in 1809 the Amish into Walnut Creek Ohio, making this today the largest Amish settlement in the world.

In 1832 political émigrés from Hambach Festival's freedom movement fled to America, for example to Philadelphia, Columbus, Ohio and St. Clair, Illinois. In 1839 Saxon Lutherans settled in Perry County, Missouri. Then the so-called Old-Lutherans settled in Buffalo and Bergholz, New York and Freistadt, Wisconsin. And in 1843 immigrants from Mainz came as settlers into New Braunfels, Frederickburg and Castell, Texas.

The Forty Eighters fled as a result of the failed revolution in Frankfurt. They migrated to the mid-West and Texas. The United States Census Bureau (*German Life*, October/November 2007) found that German Americans are the largest ethnic group in the US in twenty-three of the fifty states. The Census Bureau divides the country into four regions: In the Northeast Region only in Pennsylvania do Germans predominate. In Region 2, the South, Germans predominate only in Florida. Region 3-The Midwest has Germans as predominate in all of its states. And in Region 4, the West, Germans are predominate in seven of the thirteen states (these seven being Idaho, Montana, Nevada and Wyoming, Alaska, Oregon and Washington)

From 1850 to World War I, German immigration was so heavy that, accord to Anderson and Thode, "North America is almost one huge German settlement, both in cities and on farms."

The poor economic conditions of Europe, the need for skilled labor in the US and the lure of the "good life" brought millions of Germans to all parts of the US. The disruption in Germany after WWI brought

Germans from many German speaking lands to parts of the US where industry needed the skilled labor of those who were without work in Germany.

From 1933 on Nazism's opponents (Jews, intellectuals, scientists, artists and others), enriched the intellectual and cultural life of US universities, metropolitan areas and southern California.

And finally starting in late 1945, displaced persons (DP's) mostly from the eastern German territories and German war brides found homes here. There has been some German emigration from the former East recently as economic difficulties there have driven out young people seeking better employment opportunities here and in the former West. Also some Germans have come to CT. recently because many German firms have located here. Of all foreign firms in CT, the German firms are the largest in number.

Germans left their homeland for points further distant than the U.S. Many of the countries of South America were recipients of Germany immigrants. And at various times the Germans migrated Eastward in Europe to Russia at the time of Catharine the Great. They are known as the *Volga Deutsch*. Many others moved along the Danube (*die Donau*) into Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania. Some settled in what today are lands of the former Czechoslovakia. In most of these locations they maintained their Germans ethnic identity and their language to such an extent that when, for example they were shipped back to Germany in the time of Stalin, they still spoke the German of their ancestors from 150 years earlier

Understanding German Culture

Let us think of the life our German ancestors left behind. It was vastly different from the life they came to. I once had the opportunity to teach English in a school in Germany. The students wanted to know what my interests and hobbies were and I told them genealogy, i.e. Familienforschung, Ahnenforschung, Stammbaumforschung.

They were surprised and wanted to know why. I tried to explain that Americans have a great need to know where they came from. I continued by asking the students if they were from the town (Hainichen, in the state of Sachsen where we had established an exchange program), and 24 of the 25 of the students said their families had always lived there and this was after unification, which has resulted in some dislocation. All but one of the students was German and their families had always lived there as far back as they could recall. Some even thought they had been there at the time the town was established in about 1100! So we must assume that our ancestors had mostly always lived in the same town, in the same region and spoke the same kind of German and went to the same type of church.

We need to know also that the class structure of Germany was rigid. Each class was required by law to have a certain income level and accumulated wealth. The first class consisted of wealthy farmers (*Bauer*), about 2-5%. They had large farms, some of which they owned and the rest obtained by fief from a landlord or the church. They occupied important positions in the town, such as *Vogt* or governor or village judge. Some were innkeepers that brought in the most money.

The common farmers made up the second class, perhaps 60-80% of the people. They owned land from which, through hard work, they gained a modest standard of living. In addition to farming they might have worked as smiths, cart wrights, coopers, tailors or shoemakers.

The third class consisted of the day laborers (*Tagel_hner*) in southern Germany sometimes called *Seldner*. They worked for the other farmers for day wages, very extremely poor and uneducated. Sometimes they had other occupations such as weaver, rope-maker or tanner.

Pay close attention to occupation and class of your ancestors. Landed peasants usually stayed in one place for many years but we can expect landless ancestors to move often although to nearby places. Young people seem to get lost and then reappear when they marry.

Unlike today, well-off peasants retired and lived with their families, their sons' and daughters' families. There were no retirement communities or homes or 55+ developments. Young people went to work on nearby farms as farmhands and maidservants for several years before settling back in their hometowns.

Many men spent some time in military service. Long-term soldiers often worked as agricultural labors during peacetime. They often had to struggle to make ends meet.

Throughout most of Central and Northern Europe, in the 1800's the average age at marriage was twenty-nine for men, and twenty-seven for women. Divorce was basically unheard of. However, death led to many second marriages. People who lost a spouse remarried quickly. It took two parents to raise a family and for a family to function. Keep this kind of information in mind when you search for ancestors who were nearing thirty. And look for a second marriage shortly (sometimes only months) after the death of a spouse.

Before 1820 marriage was allowed only with the permission of the landlord and the engaged couple had to pay the lord for his permission and prove to him and to the community that they would be able to support themselves and their children without outside help. Since many couples did not have the necessary money, a large number of couples remained unmarried. Illegitimate births (*unehlich*) were frequent, estimated at least 25% of all births, the parents of illegitimate children were punished publicly. Because of these conditions many emigrated! Sometimes a family put together money to send a son, or couple, of the family to the U.S. with the hope that he would be able in the New World to make enough to send for more members of the family to emigrate. There are even examples of a community putting together funds to send the poorest out to America! In 1884 the fee for the crossing, lowest class, was 80 Marks or sixty florins. An upper class landlord in southern Germany at that time had to have a net worth of 1,000 florins.

Also in our research it is helpful to know that people generally had to marry within their towns and within their class. Thus most people in a village were related.

Life expectancies were generally low, under fifty in the 1800's. Infant mortality rates in the middle of the 1800's indicate that a 25% of all babies born in Europe died before their first birthday. Often a family would use the same name for a child born after the death of a former one

When you or your ancestors say they were German, does that mean they came from modern Germany or from some German speaking land? It will help you to find their place of origin. When you read in the US 1860 census that your ancestor came from the Rhineland, you need to understand that could have been Germany or France, possibly Belgium or the Netherlands.

German Names

Consider the issues of names. Try all the alternative forms for your ancestor's name. In George F. Jones' book, *German Names* 2nd Edition, my ancestor, Jakob Burkhardt, spelled B U R K H A R D T, could also be found under Burgard, Burgarts, Burkhard, Burhard, Burhart, Burkart, Burckhart, Berghart and a variety of other spellings, and his first name JAKOB or JACOB. I know, however, that because he lived near the French/German border, he also used the name Jacques Bouregard and spoke French and German. In early German his name is also Burcardius, from the Latin. In the German language until the 1870's there was a feminine form of the last name so the name Ertel for the man became Ertelin for a woman.

About 50% of all German men had the name Johann or Jakob with a middle name that frequently became the name by which he was called. (a *Rufname*). So Johann M. could be Johann Michel, or just Michel and Jacob W. could be Jakob Wilhelm or just Wilhelm.

We have found also that about 50% of all German women were named Anna or Maria. Thus my great grandmother was Anna Barbara, called Barbara, her mother was Anna Marguerithe, as was her sister and so on.

Perhaps you know that your family is German but their name is Farmer. It may very well be that your ancestor, somewhere along the line, fearing discrimination, changed his from *Bauer* farmer in German.


Germans In Connecticut

Why, then did the Germans come to Connecticut? Mostly they came for economic opportunities as in the example of Rockville, where Germans began building homes in the 1850's for the families that seem to have been recruited to work in the developing woolen mills. The history of Vernon, written by Ardis Abbott, states that in 1870 the largest group of foreign born in Rockville were Germans. They came to Hartford for the industry there; they came to Meriden and Waterbury for the metal industries there.

As far as I can determine, Germans who came to our state, came in largest numbers after 1850 with the exception of the few Hessians in Fairfield County. Here I am speaking of Germans who came directly to Connecticut not those who came first to New York State and then moved here in the second or third generation.

To find your German ancestors in Connecticut the process is basically like other genealogical research.

First, assemble all the information you have about your family. Meet with the older members of the family who may have memories handed down by previous generations. Write down everything these relatives tell you. Discredit nothing. Collect all the documents that your family has preserved. Using the chart below, try to transliterate, (write the German letters from the old script into our modern alphabet.)

Music Cataloging at Yale  Language Tools

Fraktur chart

See also: script and printed Fraktur || Fraktur || written Fraktur || What does this blasted thing say? || Fraktur in different fonts

Capital letters		Lower case letters		Roman	Fraktur	Written
Q = A	N = N	a = a	n = n	A a	Ꝑ, ꝑ	Ꝑ, ꝑ
B = B	D = O	b = b	o = o	B b	Ꝓ, ꝓ	Ꝓ, ꝓ
C = C	P = P	c = c	p = p	C c	Ꝕ, ꝕ	Ꝕ, ꝕ
D = D	Q = Q	d = d	q = q	D d	Ꝗ, ꝗ	Ꝗ, ꝗ
E = E	R = R	e = e	r = r	E e	ꝙ, Ꝛ	ꝙ, Ꝛ
F = F	S = S	f = f	s = s	F f	ꝛ, Ꝝ	ꝛ, Ꝝ
G = G	T = T	g = g	t = t	G g	Ꝟ, ꝟ	Ꝟ, ꝟ
H = H	U = U	h = h	u = u	H h	Ꝡ, ꝡ	Ꝡ, ꝡ
I = I	V = V	i = i	v = v	I i	ꝣ, Ꝥ	ꝣ, Ꝥ
J = J	W = W	j = j	w = w	J j	Ꝧ, ꝧ	Ꝧ, ꝧ
K = K	X = X	k = k	x = x	K k	Ꝩ, ꝩ	Ꝩ, ꝩ
L = L	Y = Y	l = l	y = y	L l	ꝫ, Ꝭ	ꝫ, Ꝭ
M = M	Z = Z	m = m	z = z	M m	Ꝯ, ꝯ	Ꝯ, ꝯ

Source of the chart: www.yemilshgen.org/gtr/430/aweb01.htm

§ appears only at the end of a word or syllable. See *A Manual of European Languages for Librarians*, c1975: p. 24.

ß is used only as lower case and substituted with Ss when it would be used in upper case.

This information is from Sven-Olof (Carlsson,sh at arcor.de), Hamburg, Germany, received in an e-mail on July 21, 2005.

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Comments to Hickey, Kim: Yale University Music Library
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<http://www.library.yale.edu/cataloging/music/fraktur.htm> 10/5/2008

Courtesy of the German Genealogy Group, November 2008.

Second, try to determine the location from which your Germans came. Try the Meyers Lexikon listed in the bibliography, under Ancestry. First find the state or the *Land* and then scan carefully a good German map of that state. Good state maps of Germany are available from standard book dealers. Use the internet.

Third, use all the research materials available. The Church of the Later Day Saints (LDS) Family History Library in Salt Lake City has a good Research Guide covering German Research. Ancestry.com and Ancestry.de (for Germany) has collections of German records.

Be aware that the Mormons are somewhat suspect in Germany and are sometimes considered a cult. Therefore microfilming of church records is sometime prohibited or at least restricted.

Be careful using Census records. Your ancestor may be listed as coming from W_rzburg, Franken, Bavaria, all of which indicate the same place. The census records may show a Johann Ludwig Schmidt in 1860 and then 10 years later a Ludwig Schmidt, who are probably is the same person. Likewise they may show a Anna Maria Schmidt and later a Maria Schmidt, again the same person. Consider all the people shown at one residence and then look for the neighbors, who may be relatives or friends. Immigrants settled in enclaves near the people they knew in the "old country".

Consult the passenger immigration lists and be certain to note what other people are listed near your ancestor in the list. They could be friends or relatives.

Fourth, if you know or have found the town where your ancestors lived in the U.S., visit the town and the town's cemeteries. Try to determine what church your ancestor attended, where the records for the church are. Many of the Lutheran churches were established by German immigrants. Also visit the town hall to determine if there were (or still are) German clubs, music organizations and athletic groups. Many such organizations have records of their members. Some towns in CT. had German schools that were mostly closed at the time of the First World War. Records of those schools are available, often in the town hall or historical society.

Many Connecticut towns have cemeteries where Germans are buried in specific sections. For example, in Grove Hill Cemetery in Rockville, approximately 40% of the graves are German. The inscriptions are written in German with poetry and sayings appropriate to the deceased.

Town histories are usually available in the library or in the town's offices.

The Connecticut State Library has some copies of German newspapers published in various cities in the state. Although the collection is far from complete, some editions contain obituaries of Germans. They are worth checking out.

Fifth, after you have exhausted these sources, consider making contact with officials in Germany. In the last few years the government in Germany has established two centers for German historical research. The *Deutsches Auswanderung Haus* in Bremen has extensive which are increasing constantly. And Hamburg's Balinstadt (see the bibliography) is compiling exit materials from that city. Because Bremen and Hamburg were the two major ports for emigration both cities have established research facilities. Their e-mail addresses are listed in the bibliography. They will undertake searches and will communicate with you in English. There is a fee at both centers. "Ancestry.de" has records similar to "Ancestry.com".

It is possible to write to the mayor of the town and ask for help. Most towns now have web sites and can be found by simply using the name of the town and *.de*. [For example: Munich.de.] Germans are friendly people, usually ready to help.

Many towns in Baden W_rttemberg have found town historians who have compiled the family data from the citizen registers, the church registers of marriage records, birth and death, and some military records. It was most good luck to find such a book for Jacob Burkhardt's family from Walldorf. This record contains more than 4,000 entrees; its title is *Walldorfer Familienbuch, 1650-1900*. Klaus Ronellenfisch, a local

mathematics teacher, compiled the data and annotated the 823-page volume. Included here is entry number 0105 that chronicles John Jacob Astor's family.

0105		
∞ 15.04.1749 Wdf ref.: <u>Johann Jacob Astor</u> , ref., Bg., Metzger, * 07.07.1724 Wdf, † 18.04.1816 Wdf, Eltern: <0103>, weitere Ehen: <0107> und <u>Maria Magdalena vom Berg</u> , luth., * 20.07.1730 Ittlingen, † 01.05.1764 Wdf, Eltern: Joh. Dietrich u. Maria Ursula		
Bemerkung: Tod EF: "Elisabetha, Fr.d. Michael Astor, Bg. u. Metzgermstr."!?		
K I N D E R: (ref.)		
Peter	* 04.03.1750	† 15.02.1752
Georg Peter	* 28.04.1752	nach London, ab 1818 New York
Johann Heinrich	* 09.01.1754	† 1831 starb in New York
Catharina	* 21.04.1757	∞ Ehringer
Johann Melchior	* 31.10.1759	nach Neuwied (Horn S.17/18)
Johann Jacob	* 17.07.1763	† 30.03.1848 Walld. "großer Sohn", † New York

from Walldorfer Familienbuch

In the last entry for Johann Jacob (John Jacob Astor), we see that he was born on the 17th of July, 1763 and died in New York on the 30th of March 1848 as Walldorf's "Great Son" .City. He was the son of Johann Jacob Astor, a Reformed citizen, a butcher, who was born the 7th of July 1724 in Waldorf and who died the 18th of April 1816. His mother was Maria Magdalena von Berg, who was Lutheran; she was born the 10 July, 1730 in Ittlingen and died the first of May, 1764. If you find that your German town has such a research tool, you will discover much about the lives of your ancestors.

Space does not permit an evaluation of the materials in the on-line bibliography. It is intended only as a starting point for your search for German ancestors.

In preparing this article, I realized that what is available about German genealogy was far greater than what is needed for a periodical article. What I have offered here is a intended to be a first step in finding your German ancestors. Hopefully, you may establish a contact with relatives still in Germany.

Researching German Genealogy – Bibliography

By Nancy Lister

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German Life. Various bi-monthly issues. Zeitgeist Publications. Inc., 1068 National Highway, LaVale, MD, 21502.

German Life. "On to a New Home: Geography of German Immigration." October/November 2007.

New England Ancestors. "A Focus on Germans in New England". Vol 8, no2. Spring 2007.

Web Sites and Microfilm Sources

Ancestry.com. Search the data bases these and others for:

- Passenger and Immigration Lists Index
- Hamburg Passenger Lists
- New York 1820-1850 Passenger Immigration Lists
- WWI. Civilian Draft Registration-Mecklenburg Schwerin
- Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census 1867-1900
- Atlantic Ports Passenger Lists 1820-1873, 1893-1959
- Württemberg, Germany Emigration Index
- Brandenburg/Prussia Emigration Records
- Meyers Orts-und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* (a pre-world War 1 comprehensive Gazetteer of the German Empire.)
- U.S. and International Marriage Records, 1560-1900.
- Et alia.

Auswanderer-bw.de (Auswanderer aus Baden Württemberg). Emigrants from Baden Wuerttemberg.

Bremen Information:

touristik@bis-bremerhaven.de
event@bis-bremerhaven.de
bermerhaven-tourism.de

Castlegarden.org (New York Passenger Lists 1830-1892)

Daddezio.com/genealogy/german/surnames/nenp.html (New England Naturalization Petitions. This particular subset contains petitions mostly for German immigrants.)

Family Search.org (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Saints) to order records to be used in local Family History Centers. International Genealogical Index (known as the IGI), data base of six hundred million names includes abstracts from many German church records and is available at the LDS website. Too many resources to list.

Family History Library. Many sources on film.

- Alsace Emigration Index
- Passport Records
- Thirty Years War
- The Wuerttemberg Emigration Index
- Permission to Emigrate Records
- Germanic Emigrants Register
- Et alia

Feeffhs.org. The Federation of Eastern European Family History Societies not restricted to German ethnics, but is powerful web-site can be extremely helpful. One great feature is an 1882 map of Europe in great detail that can be used to find many village names of the time.

Genealogienetz.de. The German Genealogy Website. Much information about German enclave groups, especially the Donauschwaben (Germans who emigrated from southern Baden-Wuerttemberg-Schwabia across the Danube River).

Hamburg Information:

Info@balinstadt.com
Balinstadt.com

Ingeneas.com (Canadian passenger lists)

Jewishgen.org. The Jewish Shtetl Seeker. This resource can locate places by their former names, and variants of names with the Soundex system.

Palam.org. Palatines to America-Genealogy Society-Searching German Speaking Ancestors.

Progenealogist.com/palproject/ne/index.html (the Palatine Project-New England)

Sggee.org.. The Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe devoted to the study of those people with German ancestry who lived in present-day Poland and the north-western Ukraine.

Other Sources

German National Tourist office
122 East 42nd Street
New York, NY, 10168
212-661-7200
800-637-1171
Cometogermany.com

German Information Center USA
4645 Reservoir Road, NW
Washington DC., 20007
202-298-4000
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Translators and Interpreters.

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