

Printed Sources for German Research

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Sources for ancestral records

Search for ancestors in ecclesiastical or civil records on microfilm at << <https://www.familysearch.org/catalog-search> >>. Enter the correct town and find microfilm or fiche number

Microfilms

Most German microfilms contain parish and civil records, but also passenger lists and family histories
Films contain mostly birth/baptismal entries, marriages, and deaths

Available at Family History Library: Rhineland, Palatinate, Baden, Württemberg, Mecklenburg, Alsace-Lorraine, Posen, Pomerania, East and West Prussia, Silesian parts of Brandenburg, parts of Schleswig-Holstein

Most records are younger than 1875

Records Selection Table

This table can help you decide which records to search. In column 1, find the goal you selected. In column 2, find the types of records that are most likely to have the information you need. Then turn to that section of this outline. Additional records that may also be useful are listed in column 3. The terms used in columns 2 and 3 are the same as the subject headings used in this outline and in the Locality Search of the Family History Library Catalog.

1. If You Need	2. Look First In	3. Then Search
Age	Church Records, Civil Registration, Jewish Records	Obituaries, Naturalization and Citizenship, Schools
Birth date	Church Records, Civil Registration, Jewish Records	Obituaries, Occupations, Census
Birthplace	Church Records, Jewish Records, Census, Obituaries	Occupations, Naturalization and Citizenship, Schools, Military Records
Boundaries (parish, district, or county)	Gazetteers, Church History	Maps, History, Historical Geography
Death	Church Records, Civil Registration, Jewish Records, Obituaries, Newspapers	Probate Records, Court Records, Occupations, Cemeteries
Emigration information	Emigration and Immigration, Societies, Military Records, Periodicals, Newspapers	
Historical background	History, Church History	Societies
Language helps	Language and Languages	Handwriting

Living relatives	Directories, Genealogy	Societies, Periodicals
Maiden name	Church Records, Civil Registrat.	Jewish Records, Obituaries
Marriage	Church Records, Civil Registration, Jewish Records	Genealogy, Periodicals, Nobility, Newspapers
Naming customs	Names (Personal)	Genealogy, Periodicals
Noble families	Nobility, Heraldry	Biography, Periodicals
Occupations	Church Records, Occupations, Directories, Population	Naturalization and Citizenship, Census, Church Directories, Dwellings
Parents, children, and other family members	Church Records, Civil Registration, Obituaries, Jewish Records	Probate Records, Land and Property, Naturalization and Citizenship
Physical description	Military Records, Biography	Genealogy, Emigration and Immigration
Place-finding aids	Gazetteers, Maps	Historical Geography
Places of residence	Population, Church Records, Emigration and Immigration, Directories, Jewish Records, Military Records	Biography, Genealogy, Census, Dwellings, Land and Property, Periodicals Names (Personal)
Previous research (compiled genealogy)	Genealogy, Periodicals, Societies	History, Biography, Nobility, Dwellings
Record-finding aids	Archives and Libraries, Church History, Church Directories	Societies, Periodicals

Publications

Search for publications at the Family History Library << <https://www.familysearch.org/catalog-search> >> (for titles, authors, places, and keywords)

Also search for publications in local libraries and archives (Keyword search via Internet browser)

Use FirstSearch WorldCat << <http://www.worldcat.org/advancedsearch> >> and get the book through Inter Library Loan

Check also the library of your local university

Search for a town book or old photographs through Amazon.com << www.amazon.com/ >> or e-bay << <http://www.ebay.com/> >>

Search also for:

Ortsfamilienbücher (village lineage books or one-place studies)

Geschlechterbücher (lineage books)

Biographies contain only prominent well-known citizens (search FamilySearch catalog for “Deutscher biographischer Index”, “Neue deutsche Biographie”, “Die großen Deutschen: neue deutsche Biographie”, or “Allgemeine deutsche Biographie”

Other printed material:

Der Schlüssel (=The Key; contains family name index of genealogical publications starting in 1950);
Familiengeschichtliche Quellen (Family History Sources); Ostdeutsche Familienkunde

German genealogical societies (search for some link starting with “Buch” or “Bücher”

No complete lists are available. The following two links contain links to many of the German genealogical societies.

Lists several societies: << <http://db.genealogy.net/vereine/> >> (German)

Lists several societies: << <http://wiki-en.genealogy.net/Portal:Societies> >> (German and English)

Parishes

Search in gazetteers for parish location (e.g. Map Guide to German Parish Registers) and contact parish direct. Look on Internet or in German phone book << www.dastelefonbuch.de >> for postal address

Archives

Public archives: Staatsarchiv (state archive), Staatsfilialarchiv (local state archive), Stadtarchiv (city archive)

Church archives: Lutheran and Catholic archives (several in each federal state – but each with different geographical jurisdiction)

A virtually complete listing of German archival institutions is located at << https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Germany_Archives_and_Libraries >> or << www.archivschule.de/content/23.html >>

Most German archives have either microfilm or microfiche

Only a few German archives do research upon request

German newspaper obituaries

Usually not useful for genealogy purposes

German record types (most used)

<u>Types</u>	<u>German name</u>	<u>starting around</u>
Parish records	<i>Kirchenbücher</i>	1500
Parish transcripts	<i>Kirchenbuchduplikate</i>	1500
Civil registry records	<i>Standesamtunterlagen</i>	1874
Birth certificates	<i>Geburtsbriefe</i>	1800
Census records	<i>Volkszählungen</i>	1600
Certificates of residence	<i>Heimatschein</i>	1700
Citizenship records	<i>Bürgerbücher</i>	1300
City directories	<i>Hauslisten</i>	1600
City records	<i>Stadtbücher</i>	1200

Civil records	<i>Amtsbücher</i>	1200
Court and police matters	<i>Gerichts- u. Polizeisachen</i>	1400
Death certificates	<i>Todesscheine</i>	1800
Emigration / Immigration	<i>Aus- u. Einwanderungssachen</i>	1600
Employment matters	<i>Arbeitsachen</i>	1800
Guild records	<i>Zunftbücher</i>	1300
Land records	<i>Grundbücher</i>	1400
Marriage certificates	<i>Heiratsurkunden</i>	1700
Military records	<i>Militärurkunden</i>	1400
Move in/out registers	<i>Umzugsmedungen</i>	1700
Newspapers	<i>Zeitungen</i>	1730
Passenger lists	<i>Passagierlisten</i>	1850
Probate, testament, inheritance	<i>Testamente</i>	1200
School records	<i>Schulverzeichnis</i>	1600
Serf records	<i>Untertanenurkunde</i>	1600
Tax records	<i>Steuern</i>	1200
Vaccination records	<i>Impflisten</i>	1800
Welfare matters	<i>Armen u. Wohltätigkeitssachen</i>	1600

Civil Registration records

Cities started civil registration in 1400s – very incomplete, usually only given names plus profession
 Napoleon introduced civil registration in Alsace-Lorraine in 1792 (was stopped after he was dethroned)
 Germany started nationwide civil registration in 1876 – only available in Germany (either local archive or local civil registry office)

If request is made order only a few – otherwise possibly no answer

German Census Records

No general German Census taken before 1930s

Older Census Records exist only for Schleswig-Holstein (1769, 1787, 1801, 1803, 1819, 1834, 1835, 1840, 1845, 1850, 1855 – but 1860 is not microfilmed)

Index exists only for 1819 Schleswig-Holstein Census (fiche 6,001,784 – 788)

Contain less information than U.S. Census Records and could have mistakes (age, patronymic usage, name spelled according sound, misspelled place names)

Children of age 14 and older are usually listed with employer and not with family

Complete list of Schleswig-Holstein Census Records searchable on FamilySearch under Subjects:

Germany Preussen Schleswig-Holstein Census

Court Records

Often do not contain a name index (=Findbuch)

Contain genealogical information, but not complete

Only selected areas are microfilmed, rest in local German archives

German emigration and immigration

Three types of records available: passenger lists, permissions to emigrate, passports issued

Rule of thumb: people who lived together in Germany often settled together in new country
 Helped each other to emigrate (e.g. chain migration)
 Post of departure for Germans: Bremen (41%), Hamburg (30%), Le Havre, France (16%), Antwerp, Belgium (8%), rest through various Dutch ports
 Bremen passenger lists are incomplete for the years 1820-1891, rest destroyed, only available in Bremen
 Hamburg passenger lists are quite complete for 1850 to 1934 (search for "Auswandererlisten")
 Many books with extractions at Family History Library (B1-floor)
 Often family names were misspelled or changed on passenger lists and/or immigration records

Dictionaries

German-English-German; Latin-English; Local dialect dictionaries
 For older German terms use a German thesaurus (Deutsches Wörterbuch, Synonymwörterbuch), best is thesaurus created by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, it is also the largest German thesaurus

Weights and measures

Recommended books (unfortunately only in German available): "Alte Maße Altpreußens" (by Wolfgang Heidecke, in: Altpreußische Geschlechterkunde, vol. 23, pages 509-512), "Alte Maße, Münzen und Gewichte aus dem deutschen Sprachgebiet" (by Fritz Verdenhalven), "Alte Meß- und Währungssysteme aus dem deutschen Sprachgebiet was Familien- und Lokalgeschichtsforscher suchen" (by Fritz Verdenhalven)

Most used weights and measures:

	Metric unit	Imperial unit (rounded)
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Measure of length

1 Äquatorgrad	111.3 km	69.159 miles
1 Meridiangrad	111.12 km	69.047 miles
1 deutsche Landmeile	7.5 km	4.660 miles
1 neue geographische Meile	7.42 km	4.611 miles
1 deutsche Seemeile	1.852 km	1.151 miles
1 Kabel (= 120 Faden)	220 m	240 yard
1 Faden	1.829 m	2 yard
1 preußische Elle	0.666 m	2 ft., 2 inch
1 preußische Rute (= 12 Fuß)	3.766 m	4 yard, 5 inch
1 preußische Fuß (= 12 Zoll)	0.3139 m	1 ft., 3/8 inch
1 preußischer Zoll	2.615 cm	1 3/8 inch

Square measure

1 geographische Quadratmeile	55.0629 km ²	21.260 sq.miles
1 preußischer Morgen (= 180 preuss. Quadratruten)	0.2533 ha	0.630 acre
1 preußische Quadratrute	14.0185 m ²	150.894 sq ft.
1 bayerisches Tagwerk (= 400 bayer. Quadratruten)	0.3407 ha	0.842 acre
1 bayerische Quadratrute	8.5175 m ²	91.682 sq ft.
1 preußischer Quadratfuß	0.0985 m ²	1.062 sq ft.

Cubic measure

1 preußische Kubikrute	53.423 m ³	11,751.5 gal
1 Klafter (= 108 Kubikfuß)	3.339 m ³	734.5 gal
1 Kubikfuß	0.031 m ³	6.819 gal

Measure of capacity

1 preußischer Scheffel	0.54 hl	11.878 gal
1 bayerischer Scheffel	2.22 hl	48.393 gal
1 Malter	1.5 hl	32.995 gal
1 Schiffstonne	2.21 m ³	486.132 gal

Weights

1 Zentner	50 kg	22.680 pound
1 Pfund (= 30 Lot)	500 gram	1.102 pound
1 altpreußisches Pfund	467.7 gram	1.031 pound
1 Lot (= 10 Quentchen)	16.66 gram	0.588 ounce
1 Karat	0.2 gram	0.6172 grain

Letter Writing Guides

Available at << www.familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Germany_Letter_Writing_Guide >>

To parishes and private persons write in German for a first contact (even bad German is better than perfect English)

Address males with: Sehr geehrter ...; females with: Sehr verehrte ...; If unknown: Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren -> never use first names if addressing someone

Use a friendly, almost submissive undertone

Capitalize first letter of personal pronouns (Sie, Ihr, Ihre, Ihnen)

Offer to pay for service – and fulfill this promise later on

End with: Mit freundlichen Grüßen

If your bank charges too much for a money transfer to Germany, use xoom.com (\$5 per transfer, faster than banks, you can track transfer)

Word lists

Most common words and abbreviations found in genealogy related records (incl. Latin)

acc.	accepi, acceptus	angenommen	accepted (e.g. paternity)
aff.	affinis	verwandt	related
a.m.	ante meridiem	vormittag, früh	morning
ak.		Altkatholisch	Old Catholic
ba.		Baptistisch	Baptist
bapt.	baptizatus	getauft	baptized
Bez.		Bezirk	canton, region, area
b.m.	beatae memoriae	seligen Angedenkens	in glorified memory of
ca.		calvinistisch	Calvinistic (Reformed)
cat.	catastro	Verzeichnis	register, index
ca.	circa	etwa	circa, approximately
cop.	copulate	verheiratet	married
c.a.e.d	civil act eodem	die standesamtliche Trauung am selben Tag	civil marriage on the same day
Dr.		Doktor	Doctor, medic
den.	denatus	gestorben	dies
eod.	eodem	derselbe	the same (e.g. date, person)
ehel.		ehelich	legitimate
err.		errechnet	calculated (e.g. birth date)

ev.		evangelisch	lutheran
Ev.A.B.		Evangelische Kirche Augsburger Bekenntnis	Lutheran Augsburg Confession
fil.	filius	Sohn	son
fila.	filia	Tochter	daughter
fr.		französisch reformiert	French Reformed
geb.		geboren, Geburtsname	born, birth name, maiden name
gen.		genannt	also called, nicknamed
Gem.		Gemeinde	parish, community, borough
ges.		gesamt	in sum
gest.		gestorben	died
get.		getauft	baptized, christened
getr.		getraut	married
go.		griechisch orthodox	Greek Orthodox
Gren.		Grenadier	rifleman, infantryman
gt.		genannt	also called, nicknamed
i.m.	in memoriam	zum Andenken von	in memory of
inf.	infernus, inferus	unten befindlich, der Untere	bottom entry, as listed on the bottom
jd.		jüdisch	Jewish
kath.		katholisch	Catholic
kf.		Konfirmation	confirmation, confirmed
K.B.		Kirchenbuch	parish book, parish record
Kr.		Kreis	County, district
l.c.	loco citato	an schon zitierter Stelle	as already quoted from same source
luth., lu.		lutherisch	lutheran
luth.-ref.		lutherisch-reformiert	Lutheran-Reformed
me.		mennonitisch	Mennonite
Mskr.		Manuskript	manuscript
mt.		methodistisch	Methodist
Mt.		Matrikel	register
männl.		männlich	male
Mstr.		Meister	master (in a profession)
na.		neu apostolisch	New Apostolic
nat.	natus, nata	geboren	born
NB.	nota bene	Hinweis, Bemerkung	annotation, remark
N.N.	nomen nescio	Name unbekannt	name not known
ob.		ohne Glaubensbekenntnis	without creed
ox.		orthodox	Orthodox
p.m.	piae memoriae	verstorben	deceased, died
p.m.	post meridiem	Nachmittag	afternoon
pp.	perge perge	fahret fort, und so fort	as continued, continuation
pr.		presbyterianisch	Presbyterian
Pt.		Pate, Paten	godparent(s), witness(es)
p.t.	pro tempore	zur Zeit	at this time
p.T.	post Trinitatis	nach dem Sonntag Trinitatis	after the Trinity Sunday (Trinity = first Sunday after Pentecost)
ref.		reformiert	reformed
ren.	renatus, renata	getauft, wiedergeboren	baptized, christened
rel.	relicquere	zurückgelassen, hinterlassen	the left behind (e.g. widow, children)
R.D.	reverendus dominus	der hochwürdige Herr	the Reverend
Rgt.		Regiment	regiment

R.I.P.	requiescat in pace	Ruhe in Frieden	rest in peace
rk.		römisch katholisch	Roman-Catholic
ro.		russisch orthodox	Russian Orthodox
S.d.		Sohn des, Sohn der	son of
spur.	spurius, spuria	unehelicher Sohn, uneheliche Tochter	illegitimate son, illegitimate daughter
st.n.	stili novi	im neuen Stil	new calendar style (= Gregorian cal.)
st.v.	stili veteri	im alten Stil	old calendar style (=Julian calendar)
S.v.		Sohn von	son of
sup.	supera	weiter oben befindlich, der Obere	top entry, as listed on the top
symb.	symbolum	Glaubensbekenntnis	statement of faith
T.d.		Tochter des, Tochter der	daughter of
T.v.		Tochter von	daughter of
u.d.		und des, und der	and of
unehel.		unehelich	illegitimate
ux.	uxor	Ehefrau	wife
verl.		verlobt	engaged
verh.		verheiratet	married
vid.	viduus, vidua	Wittwer, Wittwe	widower, widow
weibl.		weiblich	female
wr.		walonisch reformiert	Walonian reformed
Ww.		Wittwe, Wittwer	widow, widower
Wwe.		Wittwe	widow
Wwer.		Wittwer	widower
Zg.		Zeuge, Zeugen	witness(es)
zj.		Zeuge Jehovas	Jehova Witness
Xus, XP, XPC, XPS		Christus	Christ
Xian, Xianus		Christian, Christianus	Christian, Christianus

Word lists of old German professions

See << http://www.european-roots.com/tool_old-german-professions.pdf >> or book

“German professions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries” (by Robert Rabe, 2 volumes)

German numbering

Numerical numbers		Ordinal numbers
1	eins	erste (erster, erstes)
2	zwei, zwo, zwa	zweite, zwote, zwate (-r, -s)
3	drei	dritte (-r, -s)
4	vier	vierte (-r, -s)
5	fünf	fünfte (-r, -s)
6	sechs	sechste (-r, -s)
7	sieben	siebente (-r, -s)
8	acht	achte (-r, -s)
9	neun	neunte (-r, -s)
10	zehn	zehnte (-r, -s)
11	elf (old: eilf)	elfte (-r, -s)

12	zwölf	zwölfte (-r, -s)
13	dreizehn	dreizehnte (-r, -s)
14	vierzehn	vierzehnte (-r, -s)
15	fünfzehn	fünfzente (-r, -s)
16	sechzehn	sechzehnte (-r, -s)
17	siebzehn	siebzente (-r, -s)
18	achtzehn	achtzehnte (-r, -s)
19	neunzehn	neunzehnte (-r, -s)
20	zwanzig	zwanzigste (-r, -s)
21	einundzwanzig	einundzwanzigste (-r, -s)
22	zweiundzwanzig	zweiundzwanzigste (-r, -s)
30	dreiig, dreissig	dreiigste, dreissigste (-r, -s)
40	vierzig	vierzigste (-r, -s)
50	fnfzig	fnfzigste (-r, -s)
60	sechzig	sechszichste (-r, -s)
70	siebzg, siebenzig	siebzgste, siebenzigste (-r, -s)
80	achtzig	achtzigste (-r, -s)
90	neunzig	neunzigste (-r, -s)
100	hundert, einhundert	hunderste, einhundertste (-r, -s)
101	einhunderteins	einhundertunderste (-r, -s)
102	einhundertzwei	einhundertundzweite (-r, -s)
110	einhundertzehn	einhundertundzehnte (-r, -s)
111	einhundertelf	einhundertundelfte (-r, -s)
200	zweihundert, zwohundert	zweihundertste, zwohundertste (-r, -s)
201	zweihunderteins, zwo...	zweihundertundzweite, zwo... (-r, -s)
300	dreihundert	dreihundertste (-r, -s)
400	vierhundert	vierhundertste (-r, -s)
500	fnfhundert	fnfhundertste (-r, -s)
600	sechshundert	sechshundertste (-r, -s)
700	siebenhundert	siebenhundertste (-r, -s)
800	achthundert	achthundertste (-r, -s)
900	neunhundert	neunhundertste (-r, -s)
1000	tausend, eintausend	tausendste, eintausendste (-r, -s)

Latin/Roman numbering

1	I	unus, una unum	primus, prima, primum
2	II	duo, duae	secundus, (a, um), alter-
3	III	tres	tretius (a, um)
4	IV	quartor	quartus (a,um)
5	V	quinque	quintus (a, um)
6	VI	sex	sextus (a, um)
7	VII	septem	septimus (a, um)
8	VIII	octo	octavus (a, um)
9	IX	novem	nonus (a, um)
10	X	decem	decimus (a, um)
11	XI	undecim	undecimus
12	XII	duodecim	duodecimus
13	XIII	tredecim	tretius decimus


14	XIV	quattuordecim	quartus decimus
15	XV	quindecim	quintus decimus
16	XVI	sedecim	sextus decimus
17	XVII	septendecim	septimus decimus
18	XVIII	duodeviginti	duodevicesimus
19	XIX	undeviginti	undevicesimus
20	XX	viginti	vicesimus
21	XXI	unus et viginti, viginti unus	primus vicesimus, unus vicesimus
22	XXII	duo et viginti, viginti duo	secundus vicesimus, alter vices.
28	XXVIII	duodetriginta	duodetricesimus
29	XXIX	undetriginta	undetricesimus
30	XXX	triginta	tricesimus, trigesimus
40	XL	quadraginta	quadragessimus
50	L	quingenta	quingagesimus
60	LX	sexaginta	sexagesimus
70	LXX	septuaginta	septuagesimus
80	LXXX	octoginta	octogesimus
90	XC	nonaginta	nonagesimus
100	C	centum	centesimus
101	CI	centum unus	centesimus primus
200	CC	ducenti	ducentesimus
300	CCC	trecenti	trecentesimus
400	CD	quadreginti	quadringentesimus
500	D	quingenti	quingentesimus
600	DC	sescenti	sescentesimus
700	DCC	septingenti	septingentesimus
800	DCCC	octigenti	octingentesimus
900	DCCCC or CM	nongenti	nongentesimus
1000	M	mille	millesimus
2000	MM	duo millia	bis millesimus
1000000	[X]		

Roman Fractions

11/12	deunx
10/12	decunx
9/12	nonuncium / dodrans
2/3	bes / besis
7/12	septunx
1/2	semis
5/12	quicunx
1/3	triens
1/4	quadrans / teruncius
1/6	sextans
1/8	sesuncia

1/12	unica
1/24	semiunica
1/36	binae sextulae / duella
1/48	siculus
1/72	sextula
1/144	dimidia sextula
1/288	scripulum

Weekday symbols (planetary symbols)

Sunday	 	Wednesday			
Monday	 	Thursday	 	Saturday	 
Tuesday		Friday			

Former German calendar names

English	German (15th -18th century)	German (9th -15th century)	Charlemayene
January	Jänner (still used)	Wintermanoth	Hartung
February	Hornung	Hornung	Hornung
March	Lenzing, Lenzmonat	Lenzinmanoth	Lenzing
April	Ostermonat	Ostarmanoth	Ostermond
May	Wonnemonat	Wunnimanoth	Wonnemond
June	Brachmonat	Brachmanoth	Brachmond (Brachet)
July	Heumonat	Hewimanoth	Heuert
August	Erntemonat	Aranmanoth	Ernting
September	Herbstmonat	Witumanoth	Scheidung
October	Weinmonat	Windumanoth	Gilbhard
November	Wintermonat	Herbistmanoth	Nebelung
December	Christmonat, Julmonat	Heilagmanoth	Christmond

Conversion from Julian to Gregorian calendar

Subtract 11 days: the 4th Oct. 1583 was followed by the 15th Oct. 1583. Which calendar was used depends on the area and on the religion. Alsace and Lorraine switched back and forth five times in history. Poland was the first one (Oct. 4, 1582), Russia last (in some remote areas as late as 1920); In Germany switched every duchy and principality between 1582 and 1760. Calendar calculator at << www.csgnetwork.com/julianmanycalconv.html >> (but it ignores geographical region) or book: "Genealogical Dates: A User-Friendly Guide" (by Kenneth L. Smith)

Genealogical symbols

Symbol	Meaning
○	Betrothed
*	Born
□ or []	Buried
~ or ≈	Christened, Baptized
○-○	Common-law marriage
○ or ()	Cremated
† or +	Died
✠	Died (Jewish)
†✕	Died of wounds
*†	Died on day of birth
†† or ++	Died out (family line)
○ ○	Divorced
♀ or ○	Female
(*)	Illegitimate birth
✕	Killed in action
♂ or □	Male
∞	Married
(✕)	Missing in action
†*	Stillborn
△	Unknown gender