FINDING YOUR GERMAN ANCESTORS’ ORIGINS

Family records
Interviews, rumors and legends, anything in writing (letters, diaries, certificates, wills, deeds, bible pages), photos, family reunion books
*Include extended family!*

Censuses
Both national and state
*Cast a wide net: not just your ancestor but also his siblings, relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances*

Vital records available in the U.S.
Civil: marriage, birth, death
Church: marriage, baptism, confirmation, burial

Public records and artifacts
Passenger lists
Naturalization petitions
Homestead applications
Passport applications
Military records, draft registrations, widows’ pension applications
Obituaries; funeral announcements and programs
Gravestones; cemetery and mortuary records

Online resources
FamilySearch.org: search engine; many archives and indexes; family trees
Ancestry.com: search engine; many archives and indexes; discussion boards; family trees
Rootsweb.org: family trees
Worldvitalrecords.com: search engine
Google
Das Telefonbuch (German national telephone directory)
Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera . . .

*BEWARE: There’s lots of misinformation on line!*

Published sources
State, county, and city histories
City directories
Church histories, booklets, and remembrances

DNA analysis

Other resources
County and local libraries: genealogy files and archives
State and local genealogical and historical societies
American and German genealogical organizations specializing in Germany

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Two good books about Germans and the Great Migration:

