

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

Two good books about Germans and the Great Migration:

Teva J. Scheer, *Our Daily Bread: German Village Life, 1500-1850* (2010).

Walter D. Kamphoefner, et al, *News from the Land of Freedom: German Immigrants Write Home* (1993).

The German Empire, 1871-1913

