

German Research: Basic Research and Principles

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1) Overview & Research Analysis

- Research Analysis & Flowchart [see last page for flowchart]
- Germany - Language or Country?
- Immigration Factors
- US & German Resources - Types, Examples
- Gazetteers - Types, Uses, Examples
- Meyer Orts Gazetteer
- Maps
- German Archive Records
- German Surname Variations
- General & Specific Suggestions

2) Language or Country?

- Origin of the word "Deutsch"
- Germany & Austria Germanic Populations
- History of German and Austrian Empires
- German-Speaking Countries

3) Immigration Factors

- Religious Factors
- Political Unrest
- Economic Distress
- American Dream
- Recruitment
- Improved Transportation

4) United States Sources for 'Town of Origin' Information

- Family Records
- Church Records
- Vital Records-Birth, Marriage, Death
- Census [1900-1930]
- Naturalization Records
- Passenger Index [post 1897]
- Social Security Index
- Military Records
- Tax Lists
- Land Records
- Probate Records
- Historical Societies
- Newspapers
- City Directories
- Local Histories
- Occupational Records

5) German Sources for 'Town of Origin' Information

- Emigration Indexes
- Passenger Departure Lists
- Periodical Indexes
- Lineage Books
- Pedigree Books
- Police Registers
- Tax Lists
- Census Records [local and country]
- Military Records
- Burgher Rolls [citizenship records]
- Historical Societies
- Newspapers
- Local Histories
- Apprentice & Guild Records
- Gazetteer
- German Sources for Town of Origin Information

6) Gazetteer

- Definition
 - A gazetteer is a dictionary of place-names.
 - List a town's political and church jurisdictions & geographical features.
 - Only the names of places that existed at the time the gazetteer was published.
 - Information varies according to the gazetteer
 - The place-names are usually listed in alphabetical order in the country as a whole or under their specific political unit.
- Uses
 - Locates all the cities and towns with same or similar names
 - Identifies all the civil and church jurisdictions
 - Give miscellaneous information about the town
 - Aids in the location of the cities and towns on maps
 - Acts as a guide to locate records
 - Identifies where the films are in the FHLC
- Types
 - Modern Place Names
 - Names-Change [post WWI & WWII]
 - Town / Gemeindelexikon (List towns, districts, parishes, civil registry offices etc.)
 - Miscellaneous: Church Inventories and Directories (types of records / years covered)

7) Major Gazetteers

- German Empire
 - Historical
 - Uetrecht, E. Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs 1912-1913. (online, films 496640-41, fiche 6000001-29)
 - Huhn, Eugen. Topographisch-statistisch-historisches Comptoir-, Amts-, Post-, Reise-, und Zeitungs-Lexiko von Deutschland: eine vollständiges deutsches Landes-, Volks- und Staatskunde 1846-1849. (4 films series: 1. 1238536-539 , 2. 125492-495, 3. 1051558-9 & 191132,49111, 4. 1187840-1187842)
 - Modern Place Names
 - Kaemmerer, M. And Müllers, Friedrich.. Müllers Großes Deutsches Ortsbuch (Gazetteer of the Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic) 1958. (fiche 6000343-6000354)
 - Kaemmerer, M. And Müllers, Friedrich. Müllers Verzeichnis der jenseits der Oder-Neisse gelegenen, unter fremder Verwaltung stehenden Ortschaften (Gazetteer of German place name changes after WWII for places now located in Poland & Russia) 1958. (film 1045448, fiche 6000340-6000342)

- Name-Change
 - Kredel, Otto, and Franz Thierfelden. Deutsch-fremdsprachiges (Deutsch-fremdsprachiges) Ortsnameverzeichnis 1931. (Two films series: 1.590387 and 2. 590457)
 - H. Hopker, Neufeld & Henius. Henius Grosses Orts- und Verkehrs- Lexikon für das Deutsche Reich 1925. (film 973171 #2)
 - Bundesanstalt für Landeskunde. Amtliches Gemeinde- und Ortsnamenverzeichnis der deutschen Ostgebiete unter fremder Verwaltung 1955. (film 824243 or 1045449, fiche 6053256)
 - Gemeindelexikon für das Königreich Preussen. (Gazetteer for the Kingdom of Prussia, i.e., all parts of the pre-1919 Empire; based on the 1905 census) 1907-1909. (Four films 1186701, 0806633-35) (available online at ancestry.com)
 - Gemeindelexikon für den Freistaat Preussen (Gazetteer for the Free State of Prussia, i.e., all parts of the post-1919 Empire that were Prussian provinces; based on the census of 1925) 1931-32. (Nine films: 806636-7, 475862,491043, 491045-491049)
- Austrian-Hungarian Empire
 - Historical
 - Rudolph, H. Vollständiges geographisch-topographisch-statistisches Orts-Lexicon von Deutschland sowie der unter Österreichs und Preussens Botmässigkeit: stehenden nichtdeutschen Länder (Gazetteer of the Germany as well as German lands governed by Austria and Prussia) (no parishes listed) 1868. (2 films: [A-R] 1256334 #2-3 & [S-Z] 1256335 #1)
 - Raffelsperger, Franz. Allgemeines geographisch-statistisches Lexikon aller österreichischen Staaten (Gazetteer of the Austrian Empire comprising areas later located in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Italy; covers 1806-1866) (2 film series: 1187928-1187933 & 1186708-1186711)
 - Allgemeines Ortschaften-Verzeichnis der im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder: nach den Ergebnissen der Volkszählung vom 31 Dec 1900. (Gazetteer for Austria portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, 1866-1918, index) (Parishes listed in the back of each volume.) 1902. (duplicate films: 1186712 #1 or 1187924 #4)
 - Oesterreich-Ungarisches Orts-Lexicon (alphabetical listing of all places which were parishes or church centers in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. 1896. (duplicate films: 1186214 #2 or 1256324 #4)
 - Modern Place-Name
 - Ortsverzeichnis von Österreich: Bearbeitet auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 21. März 1961 nach dem Gebietsstand vom 1. Jänner 1964 (Gazetteer of Austria based on the 1961 census) 1965. (film 1181555 #7)
 - Name-Change
 - Kredel, Otto, and Franz Thierfelden. Deutsch-fremdsprachiges (Deutsch-Fremdsprachiges) Ortsnameverzeichnis (two listings: German names to foreign names and foreign name to German names) 1931. (Two films series: 590387 & 590457)
 - Town / Gemeindexikon
 - Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrathe vertretenen Königreiche und Länder: bearbeitet auf Grund der Ergebnisse der Volkszählung vom 31 Dezember 1900. Published 1905-1908. (Online)

8) Meyers Orts Gazetteer

- Contains:
 - Lists 210,000 towns, hamlets, dwelling places in the German Empire, 1871-1918.
 - Lists the political unit of the town, e.g., kingdom, province, etc.
 - Lists all the jurisdictions of the towns: government, civil registration, court, military, administrative and church.
 - Lists the location of the Civil Registration Office (StdA).
 - If a comma/semicolon follows an abbreviation, the records are located in the town. If not, then the records are in the subsequent town.
 - Lists the Different Parishes, if any (Pfk).
 - Gothic font
- Available on film, fiche or online
- Steps to Take If Town Not Listed in Meyers Orts
 - Step 1: Check Huhn's Gazetteer: Topographisch-statistisch-historisches Comptoir-, Amts-, Post-, Reise-, und Zeitungs-Lexikon von Deutschland: eine vollständige deutsches Landes-, Volks- und Staatskunde. (1846-1848) [Note: In 1848 civil records were kept in the 'Bürgermeisterei' or Mayor's Office.]
 - Step 2: Check Müllers Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch.

- Step 3: Check the Gemeindelexikon für das Königreich Preussen (1905) or Gemeindelexikon für den Freistaat Preussen (1930).
- Step 4: Check the Name-Change Gazetteers.
- Step 5: Check Church Inventories & Directories.
- Step 6: Consult with maps of the time period to identify nearby town

9) Maps

- Germany
 - Karte des Deutschen Reiches 1545-1917. [Scale 1:100,000] (film 068814)
 - Meyers Kleiner Hand-Atlas : Mit Benutzung des Kartenmaterials aus Meyers Konversations-Lexikon zusammengestellt (Meyer's hand atlas of the world, with emphasis on Germany and Europe) 1885-1892 (film 1181575 #1)
 - Karte des Deutschen Reiches (Maps of the former German empire which included parts of modern Poland, Russia, Denmark, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania and the Netherlands. Reproduction of maps produced 1845-1916) 1914-1917. (Fiche 6000063-162)
 - Die Deutschen Bundesstaaten : politische Eintheilung 1845. (film 599738 # 1)
 - Grossblätter der Karte des Deutschen Reiches (Section map of German Empire-320 maps) 1960. [Scale 1: 100,000] (film 232849)
 - Königreich Preussen (Map of Prussia, now divided between Poland and Germany) 1969. [Scale 1:200,000] (film 599738 #1)
- Austria
 - Spezialkarte der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie 680 maps. (film 1045395)
 - Charte der Österreichischen Monarchie 1806. [Scale 1:200,000] (599738 # 1)
- General
 - Generalkarte von Mitteleuropa (Scale 1:200,000) 249 maps. 1889-1867. Includes Austria. (film 1181580 # 1)
- Miscellaneous
 - Modern Road Maps: Shell, Falk Autoatlas Deutschland & regional maps
 - German zip code book: Postleitzahlenbuch (lists all the towns in a zip code)

10) German Archive Records

- Records Available
 - Land & Property- Gndbücher
 - City- Stadbücher
 - Court- Gerichtsakten
 - Guild & Apprentice- Zunfbücher & Lehrlingsbücher
 - Burgher Rolls/Citizenship- Bürgerbücher
 - Wills & Probate- Testamente, Machläße
 - House Books- Häusbücher
 - Census- Volkszählungen
 - Parish Registers- Kirchenbücher
 - Family Registers- Familienregister
 - Funeral Sermons- Leichenpredigten
 - School & University- Schul-Matrikein
 - Military- Militärakten/Kriegslisten
 - Civil Registration- Zivilstandsregister
 - Police Population Registers- Meideregister
 - German Lineage Books- Deutsch Geschlechterbücher
 - Parish Register and Transcripts- Kirchenbüchduplikate
 - Emigration / Passenger Lists- Auswanderungsakten
 - City Directories- Adreßbücher
- Types of Archives: Church, Government, State, Land, District, Property, Village & Family

11) Surnames – Variations and Endings

- Potential Problems
 - Phonetics
 - Interchangeable or silent letters
 - Letters with similar pronunciations
 - Declensions (surname endings which depend on how the word is used in a sentence)
 - Patronymics

- Farm Surnames
- Dialectic and Other Variations
- Phonetics
 - Rule: If it sounds the same, it is the same.
 - Ancestors had their surnames spelled a variety of ways during their lives with every variation being correct.
- Declensions
 - Surname variations will arise from declensions or in short, the endings will take on a different form depending how the word is used in a sentence, e.g., subject, direct object.
 - The German language has four cases and three genders for nouns. Assigning the correct grammatical case to the persons in the parish / church entry is important to determine who is doing what to or for whom. This is especially important when the entry is not in column format.
- Patronymics
 - Definition: A name derived from that of a father's first name or a paternal ancestor usually by the addition of a -sen, -s, -ing or -er.
 - Practiced in Schleswig-Holstein, Lippe, Ostfriesland, Hanover, northern Rhineland and Westphalia.
 -
- Farm Names (owners took on the name of their farms)
- Dialectics and other Variations
 - Dialectic
 - Diminutive
 - Double Surnames

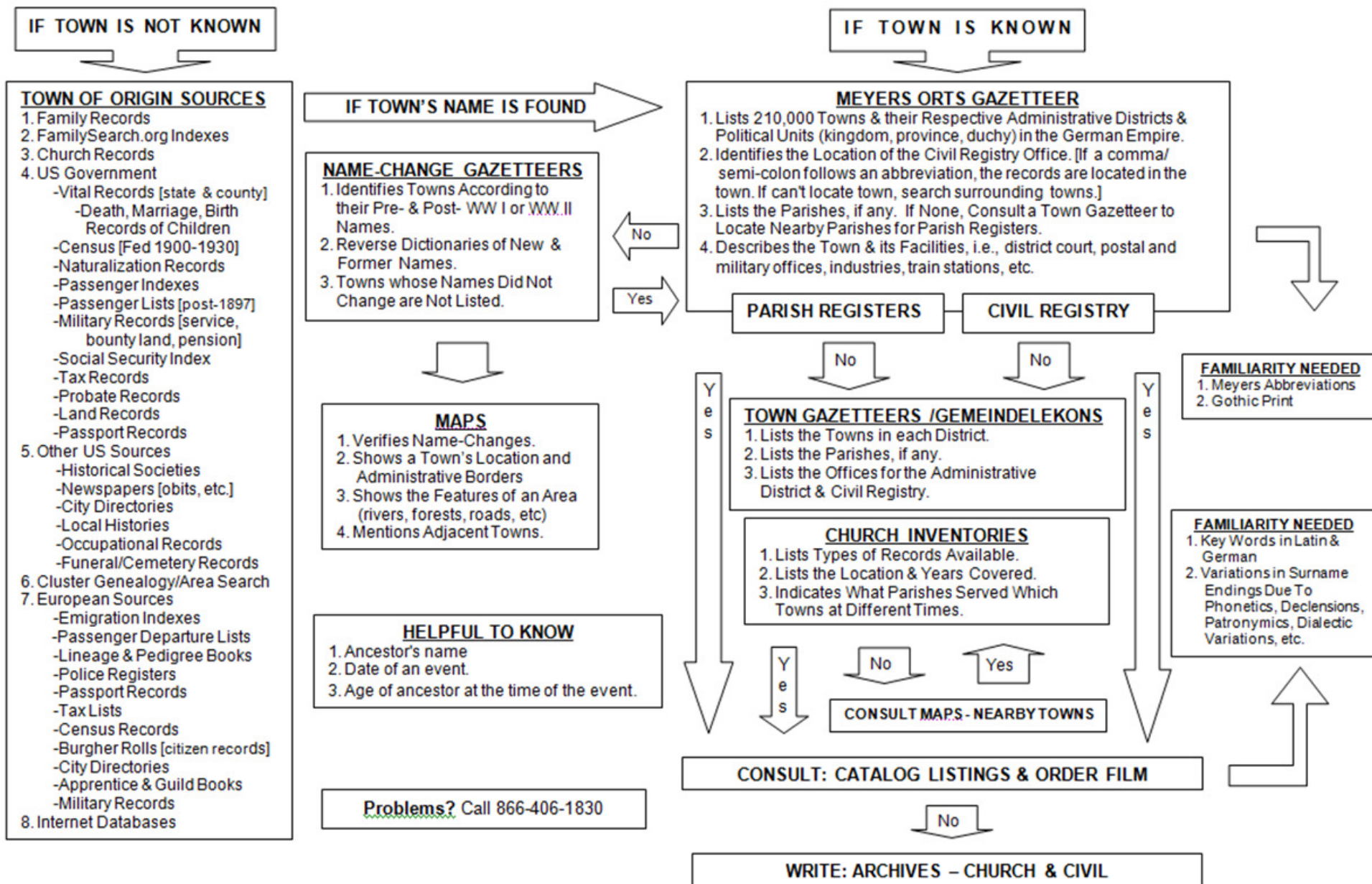
12) General Suggestions

- **Proceed from the Known to the Unknown.** Work from the present back. Find your ancestor as a adult with children, then as a child with his parents listed.
- **Know the English Equivalent of a German Ancestor's First Name.** As a general rule, Germanic people adopted the English equivalent of their first names when they settled in America.
- **Be Aware of Possible Surname Endings and Spelling Variations.** Make a list possible surname endings and spelling variations. Be aware that in America German surnames may have been altered to the English spelling (Kuper-Cooper), the English word for the surname (Schwarz-Black), or changed completely (Borowiak-Burke).
- **Look for Collateral Relatives.** When creating a list of possible surname variations, don't forget to list the surnames of collateral relatives that appear in birth and marriage records. If there are no collateral relatives listed, check parish family registers, police registration records, probate records of parents and records in surrounding villages.
- **Know the German Name of an Ancestor if he was Catholic.** Catholic records were in Latin and not German. An ancestor would use his German name in civil records.
- **For Records in Script, Practice writing Gothic and Sütterlin Scripts.** This will translate into greater ease when reading the script.

13) Specific Suggestions

- **Death of a Wife:** Don't ignore a death register entry listing a wife under her maiden name. Catholic records sometimes recorded deaths using the maiden name of a wife..
- **Death of a Husband with a Young Wife:** Check the marriage register before checking for her death. Second marriages were very common. Also it was not uncommon for a woman to be older than her husband.
- **No Marriage Record for Husband's Second Marriage:** Check the surrounding towns. Marriages usually occurred in the parish of the bride.
- **Different Mother/ Same Father:** Check the death registry for the death of the first wife. If young children are involved the father generally remarried within 6-12 months of her death.
- **Different Mother/Same Father but their Children Born in Different Towns:** Check for male siblings or relatives with the same surname of the alleged father. Verify both parents by finding another record that lists them as marriage spouses, as parents to another child or as parents to a deceased child. Clerical mistakes were not uncommon.
- **Mother of a Bride or Groom with a Different Surname than her Child:** Check to see if the mother remarried.
- **Farm Names, etc.:** Check to see if your ancestor took on a different surname. The adoption of different surname upon inheriting a farm was common. Always check parentage. Do not trust indexes.

HOW TO LOCATE PARISH AND CIVIL RECORDS IN A TOWN OF ORIGIN



Records Selection Table: Germany

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR:	LOOK FIRST IN:	THEN LOOK IN:
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 Of Parish, District, Or County	Gazetteers, Church History	Maps, History, Historical Geography
Death Date Or Place	Church Records, Civil Registration, Jewish Records, Obituaries, Newspaper	Probate Records, County Records, Occupations, Cemeteries
Emigration Information	Emigration And Immigration, Societies, Military Records, Periodicals, Newspapers	.
Historical Background	History, Church History	Societies
Language Aids	Languages And Language Aids	Handwriting Aids
Living Relatives	Directories, Internet Phone Books	Societies, Periodicals
Maiden Name	Church Records, Civil Registration	Jewish Records, Obituaries
Marriage Record	Church Records, Civil Registration, Jewish Records	Genealogy, Periodicals, Nobility, Newspapers
Naming Patterns And Customs	Naming Books	Genealogy, Periodicals
Nobility Or Heraldry	Nobility And Heraldry Books And Internet Links	Biography, Periodicals
Occupations Or Guild System	Church Records, Occupations, Directories, Population Records	Naturalization And Citizenship Records, 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
Places Of Residence	Gazetteers, Maps	Historical Geography
Previous Research Done By Others	Population Records, Church Records, Emigration And Immigration, Directories, Jewish Records, Military Record, Public Trees Posted On Various Sites, Books And Periodicals, Historical And Genealogical Societies.	Biography, Genealogy, Census, Dwellings, Land And Property, Periodicals, Names (Personal)
Record Finding Aids	Archives And Libraries, Church History, Church Directories	Societies, Periodicals