

Geography Guide



Germany during the "Second Reich" period, 1871–1918 (Kingdom of Prussia is in blue).

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HISTORICAL REGIONS		
Place	English Name	Today in...
das Banat	Banat	Romania, Serbia, Hungary
Böhmen	Bohemia	Czech Republic
Dalmatien	Dalmatia	Croatia
Elsass	Alsace	France
Galizien	Galicia	Poland/ Ukraine
Mähren	Moravia	Czech Republic
Moldau (Moldova)	Moldavia	Romania, Moldavia
Poznań	Posen	Poland
Preußen (dissolved in 1947)	Prussia	Germany, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Denmark, Belgium, Czech Republic, Switzerland
Schlesien	Silesia	Poland

PRESENT-DAY GERMAN STATES

State	German Name	Capital
Baden-Württemberg	Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart
Bavaria	Bayern	Munich
Berlin	Berlin	Berlin
Brandenburg	Brandenburg	Potsdam
Bremen	Bremen	Bremen
Hamburg	Hamburg	Hamburg
Hesse	Hessen	Wiesbaden
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Schwerin
Lower Saxony	Niedersachsen	Hanover
North Rhine-Westphalia	Nordrhein-Westfalen	Düsseldorf
Rhineland-Palatinate	Rheinland-Pfalz	Mainz
Saarland	Saarland	Saarbrücken
Saxony	Sachsen	Dresden
Saxony-Anhalt	Sachsen-Anhalt	Magdeburg
Schleswig-Holstein	Sleswig-Holsteen	Kiel
Thuringia	Thüringen	Erfurt

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

Bezirk	district
Gemeinde	community/parish
Grafschaft	countship
Heimat	home town
Herzogtum	duchy/dukedom
Kreis	district (similar to a county)
Kreisarchive	county archives
Land	state
Stadt	city
Stadtarchive	city archives

GERMAN ADDRESSES

Fr. Anna Schmidt honorific
Aachener-Str. 42 street-
69115 Karlsruhe house number
Germany postal code-town
country

GERMAN ALPHABET CHART

- **Fraktur:** a type of German lettering used from the 15th century until World War II. Fraktur lettering is often compared to the Old English Gothic typeface.
- **Sütterlin:** a German script created by graphic artist Ludwig Sütterlin and taught from 1915 to 1941 in German schools.
- **Kurrent:** a popular handwriting style found in German documents from the 16th through 18th centuries, also called Old German Script.

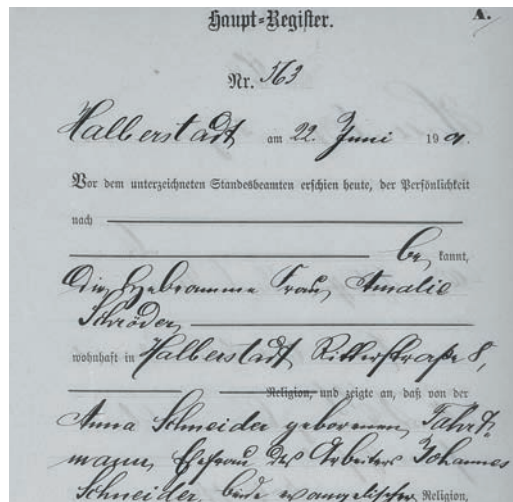
	FRAKTUR	SÜTTERLIN	KURRENT
A, a	A a	Q q	A a
B, b	B b	L b	L b
C, c	C c	L c	L c
D, d	D d	D d	D d
E, e	E e	E e	E e
F, f	F f	f f	F f
G, g	G g	G g	G g
H, h	H h	H h	H h
I, i	I i	I i	I i
J, j	I j	J j	J j
K, k	K k	K k	K k
L, l	L l	L l	L l
M, m	M m	M m	M m
N, n	N n	N n	N n
O, o	O o	O o	O o

	FRAKTUR	SÜTTERLIN	KURRENT
P, p	P p	P p	P p
Q, q	Q q	Q q	Q q
R, r	R r	R r	R r
S, s	S s	S s	S s
T, t	T t	T t	T t
U, u	U u	U u	U u
V, v	V v	V v	V v
W, w	W w	W w	W w
X, x	X x	X x	X x
Y, y	Y y	Y y	Y y
Z, z	Z z	Z z	Z z
ß	ß	ß	ß
Ä, ä	Ä ä	Ä ä	Ä ä
Ö, ö	Ö ö	Ö ö	Ö ö
Ü, ü	Ü ü	Ü ü	Ü ü

RECORDS QUICK GUIDE

CIVIL REGISTRATION

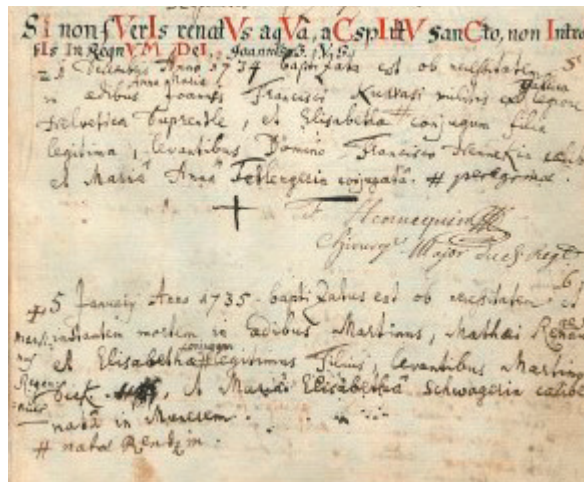
- **Dates:** 1792 (some areas); 1876 (Empire-wide).
- **Privacy Restrictions:** Births (110 years after event), marriages (80), and deaths (30).
- **Research Tip:** Some records are digitized online, but most must be ordered from the *Standesamt* (civil registration office) in which the act was registered. The online MeyersGaz.org <www.meyersgaz.org> gives the place for the office, if not in the village itself.



Birth register from 1901 in Halberstadt, Sachsen, Preußen

PARISH CHURCH REGISTERS

- **Dates:** Varies by parish. As early as the 1500s for some, but 1648 for most.
- **Privacy Restrictions:** None for Protestant records; Roman Catholic records vary upon diocese and parish policies.
- **Research Tip:** Recordkeeping practices vary by parish and era—often early records are in a narrative or paragraph format while later ones used grids and printed headings. Beginning in the 1800s, you'll find *Kirchenbuchduplikate* (church book duplicates) because some civil authorities start to require an annual set of the registers to be submitted as vital records. Many are being put online—Archion <www.archion.de> has records for many dioceses.



Baptismal register from 1734 for Protestant church of Waldsee (then in Speyer, Pfalz, Bayern)

VILLAGE FAMILY HISTORIES

- **Dates:** Vary by town.
- **Privacy Restrictions:** None.
- **Research Tip:** Known variously as *Ortssippenbücher*, *Ortsfamilienbücher* or simply *Sippenbücher* or *Dorfbücher*, these are published compilations of church and civil records. They're organized by family group, with each person given a number that creates a cross-referencing system in the book. CompGen.de <www.compGen.de> has hundreds searchable online; several American repositories have print collections.

362 Johann Georg E H N I S S, Pförtner in Stgt, zuletzt in Möz, ev. (S.d. Karl Ludwig E. in Stgt u. Anna Maria BROSS, zeitweise auch in Möz; ool Stgt 5.7.1913 Klara Pauline BINDER), * Ebershardt 29.1.1888, † Möz 3.8.1964; oolI Stgt 11.12.1937 Barbara Emilie KATZ (aus 1028), ev., * Engstlatt 30.12.1897, † Wfildberg 17.8.1980. Kdr -

E H R A T / E (H) R H A R D T
Jerg Friedrich E H R H A R D T, 1707 Fourierschütz, dann Zimmermann in Möz, (S.d. Andreas E., Schreiner in Besenfeld), * da 4.9.1678, † Möz 19.2.1751;

363 o-o 1707 mit Sabina MAYER, kath., hiesige Schloßmagd, * Kempten . . .
1 Kd: Jerg Friedrich * Möz 2., † 16.9.1707.

364 ool Möz 20.10.1711 Anna Maria HILLER (aus 885), * (wo?) err 4.1684, † Möz 11.1.1733.

7 Kdr * in Möz: 1. Joh. Michael (366). - 2. Johannes (368). - 3. Gottfried 10.10.1717. - 4. Wilhelm

Johann Georg E R H A R D T (aus 368), Schreiner * 7.11.1754, † 22.11.1815;
oo Möz 29.11.1786 Catharina ROOS (T.d. Joh. Geor R., Schäfer in Unterjettingen u. Catharina FRICK) * . . . 4.9.1759, † Möz 23.1.1818. 0 Kdr.

372 Simon E R H A R D T (aus 369), Leinenweber, * 4.8.1764, † 7.5.1799;
oo Möz 11.11.1789 Susanna Margaretha FOHR (aus 436, oolI s. 1066), * 13.9.1762, † 23.2.1834.
4 Kdr * in Möz: 1. Anna Maria 16.3.1790 † 22.2.1791. - 2. Simon (374). - 3. Elisabetha Catharina (2230). - 4. Jacob Friedrich 11.2.1797 † 15.4.1799

373 Jacob E H R A T (ERHARDT) (aus 369), Weber, * 21.11.1765, † 25.5.1843;
oo Möz 2.5.1792 Anna HAUSER (aus 744), * 18.10.1769, † 4.5.1857. 9 Kdr * in Möz:
1. Anna Maria (666). - 2. Jacob (375). - 3. Ca tharina 14.10.1796 † 7.5.1799. - 4. Johannes

GERMAN GENEALOGY GLOSSARY

GERMAN	ENGLISH
Ahnen Tafel	ancestor chart
Akt(e)	record
Aufgebot	(marriage) banns
Beerdigung	burial, interment
Begräbnis	burial
Bürger	citizen
Copulation	marriage
daselbt	same
Denkmal	memorial
Ehe, Eheschließung	marriage
Firmung	(Catholic) confirmation
Gatte	husband
Gattin	wife
geb., geboren	born
Geburtsschein	birth certificate
gefallen	died/fell in combat
geheiratet	married
genannt	called, known as
gesch., geschieden	divorce
gest., gestorben	died
get., getauft	baptized
getraut	married
Grossmutter, Grossvater	grandmother, grandfather
Hebamme	midwife
Heirat	marriage
hinterlassen	surviving, left behind
Hochzeit	wedding
Junge	boy
Jungfrau, Jungfer	maiden, virgin
Junggesell(e)	bachelor
Jüngling	young man
Kind(er)	child(ren)
Knabe	boy
Kommunikant	communicant
Konfirmation	confirmation
kopuliert	joined in marriage
ledig	single
legitimiert	legitimized
Mädchen	girl
männlich	male
minderjährig	underage, minor
mündig	of (legal) age
nachgel., nachgelassene	surviving, left behind

GERMAN	ENGLISH
niedergekommen	delivered (a child)
Niederkunft	delivery (of a child)
N(omen) N(escio) (Latin)	name unknown
Nottaufe	emergency baptism
Pate	male baptismal sponsor
Patin	female baptismal sponsor
scheiden lassen	get a divorce
Scheidung	divorce
schwanger	pregnant
Selbstmord	suicide
selig	late, deceased
Sippe	family, clan
Sohn, Söhnlein	son
Stammbaum	family tree
stammen	orginiate stem
Sterbefall, Sterben	death
sterben	die
Sterberegister	death register
Taufe	baptism
taufen	baptize
Taufregister	baptismal register
Taufurkunde	baptismal record
Tochter, Töchterlein	daughter
Tod	death
Todesursache	cause of death
tot	dead
totgeboren	stillborn
trauen	marry
Trauregister	marriage register
Trauung	wedding
unehelich	out of wedlock
verehelicht	married
Verehelichung	marriage
verh., verheiratet	married
Verlobung	engagement
verst., verstorben	deceased
verwaist	orphaned
volljährig	of legal age
Vormund	guardian
Vorname	given/Christian name
Wahlkind	adopted child
Waise	orphan
Weib	woman, wife

GERMAN VOCABULARY

NUMBERS		
	Cardinal (one, two...)	Ordinal (first, second...)
0	null	
1	eins	erste (on the first: am ersten)
2	zwei, zwo	zweite
3	drei	dritte
4	vier	vierte
5	fünf	fünfte
6	sechs	sechste
7	sieben	siebte
8	acht	achte
9	neun	neunte
10	zehn	zehnte
11	elf	elfte
12	zwölf	zwölfte
13	dreizehn	dreizehnte
14	vierzehn	vierzehnte
15	fünfzehn	fünfzehnte
16	sechzehn	sechzehnte
17	siebzehn	siebzehnte
18	achtzehn	achtzehnte
19	neunzehn	neunzehnte
20	zwanzig	zwanzigste
21	einundzwanzig	einundzwanzigste
22	zweiundzwanzig	zweiundzwanzigste
23	dreiundzwanzig	dreiundzwanzigste
24	vierundzwanzig	vierundzwanzigste
25	fünfundzwanzig	fünfundzwanzigste
26	sechsendzwanzig	sechsendzwanzigste
27	siebenundzwanzig	siebenundzwanzigste
28	achtundzwanzig	achtundzwanzigste
29	neunundzwanzig	neunundzwanzigste
30	dreiig	dreiigste
31	einunddreiig	einunddreiigste
40	vierzig	vierzigste
50	fünfzig	fünfzigste
60	sechzig	sechzigste
70	siebzig	siebzigste
80	achtzig	achtzigste
90	neunzig	neunzigste
100	(ein)hundert	(ein)hundertste

MONTHS	
January	Januar, Januarius, Jänner, Jenner, Hartmonat
February	Februar, Februarius, Hornung
March	März, Merz, Martius, Frhlingsmonat, Lenz, Lenzmonat
April	April, Aprilis, Ostermonat
May	Mai, Mei, Maius, Maien, Maji, Wonnemonat
June	Juni, Junius, Brachmonat, Brachmond
July	Juli, Heumonat, Heumond, Homonet, Julius
August	August, Augst, Augstmonat, Augustus, Ernetmonat
September	September, Herbstmonat, VIIber, 7ber
October	Oktober, Weinonat, Wymonet, VIIIber, 8ber
November	November, Weintermonat, IXber, 9ber
December	Dezember, Christmonat, Wolfsmonat, Xber, 10ber, Wolffmonet

CALENDARS IN GERMANY

For the last two centuries, dates in German records are rendered in the Gregorian calendar (the same calendar that was—and still is—used by the United States). As a result, any discrepancies between dates found in German and dates found in US records are likely the result of faulty memories or other errors (such as substituting a baptism date for the birth date), rather than calendar-conversion errors.

But when researching before 1806, you'll want to consider these three facts related to calendars:

- 1. Protestants switched to Gregorian late.** The Julian calendar, the standard in Western Europe back to ancient times, continued to be used in some Protestant German states until 1700 (as well as in Great Britain and its American colonies until 1752). Steve Morse has a "One Step" converter <stevemorse.org/jcal/julian.html> that takes dates from Julian to Gregorian.
- 2. Catholics switched to Gregorian early.** The Roman Catholic states in modern Germany quickly adopted the Gregorian calendar, proclaimed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582.
- 3. Some areas changed hands and (thus) calendars.** For a little more than a decade, western German areas that were annexed (or otherwise dominated) by the French used the French Republican calendar, which numbered years with Roman numerals beginning in 1792 (the year of the French Revolution). It was abolished by Emperor Napoleon I in 1805. The FamilySearch Wiki has an article on the article <www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/French_Republican_Calendar>, including a conversion table to Gregorian dates as well as names of months and so-called "complementary days."

HISTORICAL TIMELINE



- 800** Charlemagne (in German: Karl der Grosse) is crowned by the pope.
- 962** Otto the Great renews the mantle of Charlemagne as head of a “Holy Roman Empire.”
- 1440** Frederick III is crowned Holy Roman Emperor, beginning the Hapsburg dynasty’s reign in the role.
- 1517** Martin Luther starts the Protestant Reformation, cleaving the Holy Roman Empire’s religious unity.
- 1555** The Peace of Augsburg allows German nobles to choose Catholicism or Lutheranism for their territories.
- 1563** The Council of Trent requires Catholic parish registers; Lutherans and Reformed follow.
- 1648** The Thirty Years War ends. Many German villages are in ruins as a result of the conflict.
- 1683** Francis Daniel Pastorius founds Germantown, Penn., the first permanent German American settlement.
- 1740** Frederick the Great takes the Prussian throne. During his reign, he expands Prussia into a power equal to Austria.
- 1772** The first partition of Poland divides Polish lands between Prussia, Austria and Russia. Subsequent partitions occur in 1793 and 1795.
- 1783** Hessian soldiers fight for the British; thousands remain in America after the war’s end.
- 1806** The Holy Roman Empire ends, and French Emperor Napoleon I takes control of certain German areas; those under French influence begin civil registration.
- 1815** The Congress of Vienna forms a German Confederation.
- 1817** The Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussian lands merged into one Protestant church known as Evangelisch.
- 1848** Failed revolutions across Europe result in thousands leaving the German states to settle in America.
- 1871** The Second German Empire forms after Prussia and its allies defeat France and annex Alsace and Lorraine.
- 1874** Civil registration is decreed in the Kingdom of Prussia. Its enacted in the whole German Empire two years later.
- 1882** More than 250,000 Germans arrive in the United States, a one-year record for German American immigration.
- 1894** More than 800 German-language newspapers and periodicals are printed in the United States.
- 1918** Germany’s defeat in World War I results in several territorial losses.
- 1945** Germany’s defeat in World War II results in further territorial losses, as well as Allied occupation and division into East and West.
- 1990** East and West Germany reunify after the fall of the Berlin Wall.
- 2009** Reform relaxes vital records blackout periods: births after 110 years, marriages (80 years), and deaths (30 years).

Northern German states, circa 1547. Source: *Historischer Schul-Atlas* by F. W. Putzgers (Verlag von Velhagen & Klasing).

RESOURCES

Books

Ancestors in German Archives: A Guide to Family History Sources by Raymond S. Wright III, et. al. (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents by Roger P. Minert (GRT Publications)

Eighteenth Century Register of Emigrants from Southwest Germany (to America and Other Countries) by Werner Hacker (Closson Press)

The Family Tree German Genealogy Guide by James M. Beidler (Family Tree Books)

The Family Tree Historical Atlas of Germany by James M. Beidler (Family Tree Books)

German Church Books: Beyond the Basics by Kenneth L. Smith (Picton Press)

German English Genealogical Dictionary by Ernest Thode (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

German Immigrants in American Church Records by Roger P. Minert, et al (Picton Press and Family Roots Publishing)

German Names: A Practical Guide by Kenneth L. Smith (Masthof Press)

Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns by Edward R. Brandt, et. al. (Germanic Genealogy Society)

Germans to America, Series I (1850–1897) and Series II (1840–1849) by Ira T. Glazier (Scholarly Resources)

If I Can, You Can: Decipher Germanic Records by Edna M. Bentz (self-published)

The Magic of German Church Records by Katherine Schober (self-published)

Map Guide to German Parish Registers by Kevan M. Hansen (Family Roots Publishing, 55-plus volumes to date)

Master Index to the Emigrants Documented in the Published Works of Annette Kunselman Burgert by Annette K. Burgert (AKB Publications)

The Palatine Families of New York by Henry Z Jones Jr. (Picton Press)

Pennsylvania German Immigrants, 1709–1786 edited by Don Yoder (Genealogical Publishing Co.)

Pennsylvania German Pioneers by Ralph Beaver Strassburger and edited by William John Hinke (Pennsylvania German Society; reprinted by Picton Press)

Researching in Germany by Roger P. Minert, Shirley J. Riemer and Susan E. Serrine (Lorelei Press)

Trace Your German Roots Online by James M. Beidler (Family Tree Books)

Websites

Archion <www.archion.de>

Compugen.de/Genealogy.net <www.compugen.de>

Cyndi's List Germany / Deutschland <www.cyndislist.com/germany>

Das Telefonbuch <www.dastelefonbuch.de>

Geogen Surname Mapping <legacy.stoepel.net/en>

Grimms Wörterbuch <dwb.uni-trier.de/de>

Kartenmeister <www.kartenmeister.com>

Matricula <data.matricula-online.eu/en>

Meyers Gazetteer <www.meyersgaz.org>

Organizations & Archives

Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Mitteldeutsche Familienforschung (The Working Group for Central German Family Research) <amf-verein.de>

Archivschule Marburg Portal D <www.archivschule.de/DE/forschung/archivportal-d>

Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft genealogischer Verband (DAGV, consortium of German genealogy groups) <www.dagv.org>

Germanic Genealogy Society <www.ggsmn.org>

Institut für pfälzische Geschichte und Volkskunde (Institute of Palatinate History and Folklore) <www.pfalzgeschichte.de>

Johannes Schwalm Historical Association, Inc. (Revolutionary War Hessians) <www.jsha.org>

Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society <www.magsgen.com>

Moravian Church Archives <www.moravianarchives.org>

Palatines to America <www.palam.org>

Pennsylvania German Cultural Heritage Center <www.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/pennsylvania-german-cultural-heritage-center.html>

Sacramento German Genealogical Society <www.sggs.us>

Schwenkfelder Exile Society <www.schwenkfelderexilesociety.org>

St. Louis County Library's History & Genealogy Department <www.slcl.org/genealogy>