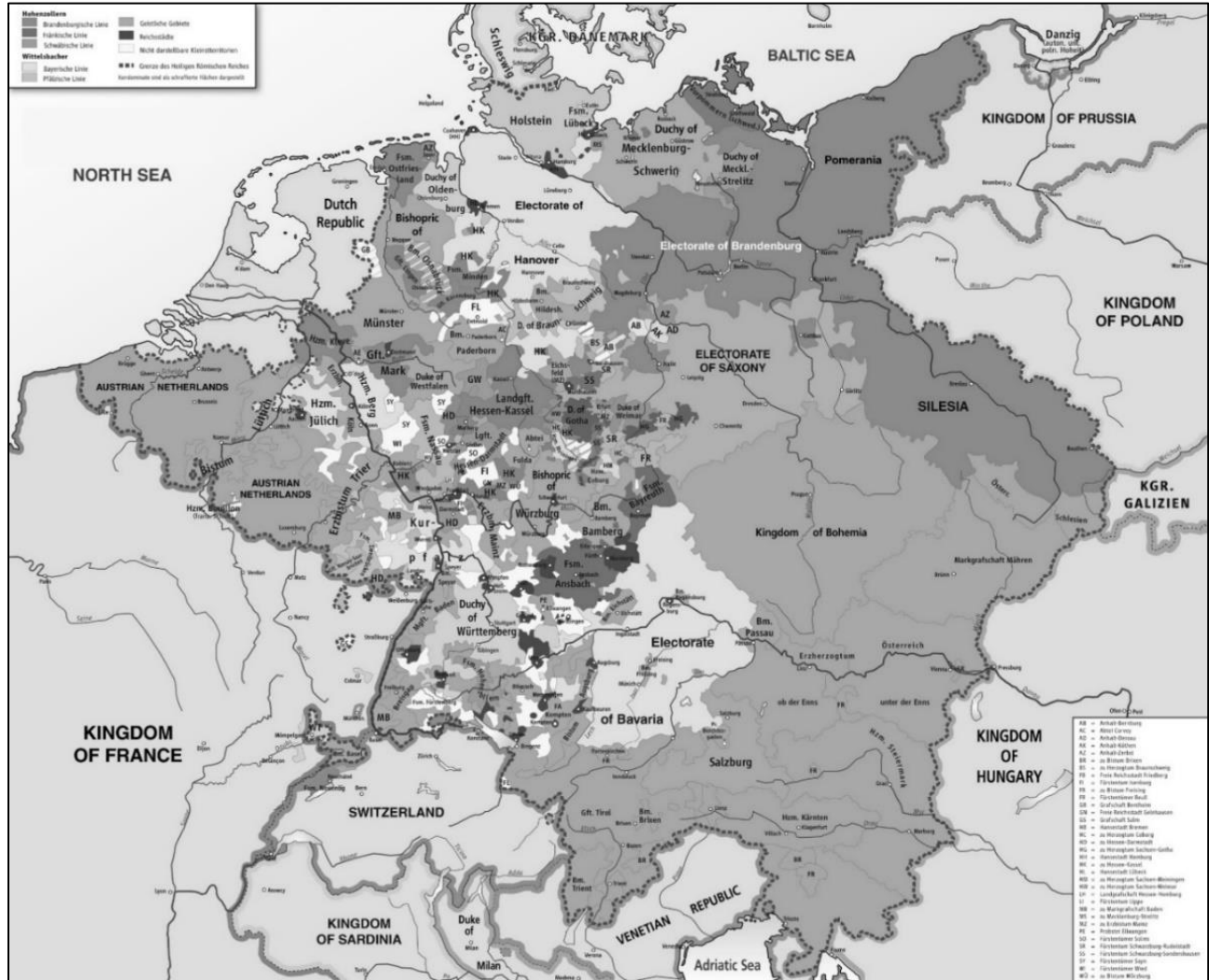


German Research Online: A Launching Pad for Your Research

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Internet research for German ancestors has come into its own in just the last few years. “Big Kahunas” **FamilySearch.org** and **Ancestry.com** have put large caches of records online, the Germany-based **Compgen.de / Genealogy.net** is now like the old Rootweb was in America, and church records are coming online all over the place! All in all, the “holy grail” quest for German villages of origin is becoming easier!



The German states in 1789 on the eve of the French Revolution

Methodologies review:

- First job: Find every document of the immigrant ancestor or mentioning immigrant
 - Prepare for surname variants
 - “Redundancy” is a virtue (e.g., obit may well have something tombstone does not)
 - Even items such as letters and diaries might give clues!
 - Be prepared for village names to be corrupted
 - Familiarize yourself with German maps / gazetteers
 - Look for “patterns of association” with other individuals
 - Process any piece of information that might distinguish the immigrant (e.g., occupation, names of other family members, etc.)
- Utilize “whole family” genealogy
 - If specific records don’t exist for your ancestor, try others in family
- Look for published sources
 - 1700s families: Burgert / Jones / Yoder / Hacker
 - 1800s families: Burkett / *Germans to America* / Emigration indexes
- Search International Genealogical Index for:
 - References to individual
 - References to clusters of the surname if it is not common
 - References to shipmates
 - References to “associated persons”
- Look for other sources of immigrant information:
 - Heimatstelle Pfalz immigrant card file
 - Hamburg embarkation lists
 - German phonebooks
 - Google searches
- Use the “concentric circles” strategy
 - If a village is found for the above categories of people (surname, shipmates, associated persons) but your immigrant is not found ...
 - ... work out from that village in “concentric circles” to other surrounding villages
- “Things found on the way to something else”
 - Machmer / Magemer / Mahomer example
 - Never turn away luck!

Types of records that might yield a place of origin:

- Naturalizations
 - Declarations of intent (“first papers”)
 - Naturalization petitions (“final papers”)
- Baptisms of children
- Marriage records
- Church burial records
- Tombstones
- Obituaries
- U.S. Census
- Family Bibles
- Family registers
- Fraternal societies’ records
- Enlistment papers
- Discharge papers
- Pension documents
- Letters from relatives

Top Overall Websites

“Genealogy.net: The number one source in German genealogy”

(includes **DigiBib**, which makes digital images of important genealogical literature, including family histories, gazetteers, and other reference works, available online)
(also includes **familienkundliche Datenbank** (family history database))

www.genealogienetz.de/genealogy.html

FamilySearch.org

(home of the FamilySearch **wiki**, an increasing number of digitized German church records, the **Family History Library Catalog** and the old **International Genealogical Index**)

www.familysearch.org

Ancestry.com

(has **Meyers Gazetteer** as a free item; included in subscriptions are the **Hamburg Embarkation Lists**, **Wuerttemberg Emigration Lists** and many other items)

www.ancestry.com

Others That Answer Most Common Questions

Internet Websites with information relevant to German research can help us answer some of the most common questions we ask as genealogists. Some examples of the questions and Websites that will help:

1) What was the village of origin for my German-speaking immigrant ancestor?

Baden-Wuerttemberg <http://www.auswanderer-bw.de>

Bremen Passenger Lists, 1920-39 <http://www.passagierlisten.de/>

Brunswick, 1846-1871 <http://www.thomas-erbe.de/ahnen/buch/001.htm>

Mecklenburg (Institute for Migration and Ancestral Research)

<http://www.immigrantgensoc.org/searches/imed/igs-imed.html>

Niedersachsen <http://www.aidaonline.niedersachsen.de/>

Northern Friesland <http://www.nordfriiskinstituut.de/datenbank.html>

Rhein emigrants <http://www.rheineahnen.de/listdoc/auswand.htm>

Schleswig-Holstein 1800s <http://www.rootdigger.de/Emi.htm>

Westphalia emigration lists http://www.amerikanetz.de/beitraege/?&no_cache=1&L=0

2) How can I help untangle the garbled name of a village of origin?

Meyers Gazetteer online

<http://www.meyersgaz.org>

Atlas des Deutschen Reichs by Ludwig Ravenstein 1883

<http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein/>

GOV Genealogical Gazetteer (part of Genealogy.net supersite)

<http://gov.genealogy.net/index.jsp>

Comprehensive gazetteer of German places east of the Oder and Neisse rivers

<http://www.kartenmeister.com/>

3) How can I get in contact with possible relatives from my ancestor's village of origin?

Das Telefonbuch (German telephone directory) www.dastelefonbuch.de

German National Tourist Board

<http://www.germany.travel/en/germany/about-us/the-gntb/the-gntb.html>

(Also – Google names of villages and find out which local tourist board the village is a part of – e-mail directly to them)

4) **How can I find out about German archives?**

FamilySearch wiki – for guides to Germany and its component states

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Main_Page

Archivschule Marburg Portal D (list of archives)

<http://www.archivschule.de/DE/forschung/archivportal-d/>

5) **How can I find church records beyond FamilySearch.org?**

Archion (originally known as Kirchenbuchportal digitized Protestant records)

<https://www.archion.de/>

Matricula church registers online – Roman Catholic registers

<http://www.matricula-online.eu/>

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