Call it a Clan, call it a Network, call it a Tribe, call it a Family: whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one! By Jane Howard

To move freely you must be deeply rooted.

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Doing German Family History Research
By Larry Eucher

Part One of a Two Series on German Family Research

Introduction:

There are several additional challenges to doing family history research in Europe as compared with studying your ancestors in the United States. The county courthouse where you are accustomed to obtaining BMD records (Birth/Marriage/Death) is often not present, instead you will navigate your way through unfamiliar civil and ecclesiastical jurisdictions. There are also language barriers to contend with. State borders in the United States are relatively changeless as you go back through time to each state's admission to the Union. In contrast, the borders in Europe have been continually revised since their inception, and continue to be so. Since your family has probably been in North America for some period of time, as you cross the ocean back to Europe there is the additional problem of finding fewer records the further back in time you go.

Take heart however as there are also many similarities. Each child still has a mother and a father, and just as here, there are many ways of documenting that fact. Some of those children grow up to join the military where their activities in war are documented. People are often tied to the land, and there are records for that, just as here. In fact, I can't think of any records that we keep in North America that do not have an equivalent in Europe. All over Europe, there are genealogical societies and state-financed central archives that are making an effort to collect records of genealogical interest and make them more readily accessible to the public, often through the internet. There are also many societies operating here in the United States that are chartered to foster interest and provide guidance to researchers who wish to pursue their European roots. With minor modifications, those same skills that you have developed to work your family history "back to the boat" will serve you well as you continue your research in Europe.

Step 0: Before You Begin, General Orientation

Individuals are the building blocks for a family. Families intermarry with other families to form clans and tribes. Tribes combine to form kingdoms, which further merge to form modern nation states. Occasionally, these nations develop into empires. The great civilizations of East and West are the history of mankind, woven from the individual threads of each of our family's histories. As we examine our ancestors we find that their life events play out as a part of this overall process.

Genealogy is the study of a chain of events that occur at a place and a time, peopled by our ancestors. Those events take place against the larger backdrop of general history. European history is very rich and very deep, so much so that it can overwhelm the beginner. A good place to begin is to examine a map of the current situation, Europe as it exists today, and see the geographical context of the country and area that you believe your ancestors came from.

MESA DWELLERS

From the Editor

The September issue of Mesa Dwellers is part one
of a two part series on German Family Research.
Part two will be in the December issue of Mesa Dwellers.
Per a request on my part, Larry Eucher took on this task
of writing a article on this subject and has done a splendid
job. I think you will find that it not only covers German
Research, but it is written in such a way that it can be used
for any country of origin research. Our many "Thanks"
to Larry for all of his time and work on this project!

From the Editors,
Kathie Vlahos & Karen Grew-Ellison

Ever wonder why Uncle John seemed so well organized?
A very hard worker, so strict? Or Aunt Retta was so neat
and tidy, nothing out of place, proud of her home? The
answer is simple, they were German! To explain that
comment, it helps us to took at and understand the society
and culture that our German ancestors came from.
Studying their country of origin not only broadens our
horizons, but we can use this acquired knowledge to have
a whole new understanding of what shaped them and it
can also help us to be able to understand out why they
took the paths they took in their lives. I believe this is
the interesting and fun part of tracing the past of our
ancestors. I have included an article on German Society
and Culture on *page 9* that I hope you will enjoy and that
it will be helpful. Most of it fits my German Ancestors
to a "Tee"!

Kathie Vlahos

Karen Merritt Sturgill will be offering a 4 hour
"Introduction to Genealogy Class" in December 2012 at
the Colorado Mesa University Community Education Center.
The Fall Catalog for the Education Center will have the
details. We will send out an email notice when the details
are known.

Have anything for the newsletter? Please contact myself
or Karen Grew-Ellison or go to:
▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ submit via-email directly
to us.

Society Officers

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Vice President	Vacant
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September 2012 – December 2012 ~ Upcoming Programs and Events
Programs and Events will be updated on reminder email sent out before each meeting

7 September 2012	Friday Help Session: 1-3 p.m. at the Main or Branch Library.
13 September 2012	Thursday Evening at 7 p.m.: Member(s) to share their research.
26 September 2012	Wednesday Noon Sack Lunch at the Museum: Familysearch.org class.
5 October 2012	Friday Help Session: 1-3 p.m. at the Main or Branch Library.
11 October 2012	Thursday Evening at: 7 p.m.: Member(s) to share their research.
24 October 2012	Wednesday Noon Sack Lunch at the Museum: Tentative: Larry Eucher - "Using Google.com".
2 November 2012	Friday Help Session: 1-3 p.m. at the Main or Branch Library.
8 November 2012	Thursday Evening at: 7 p.m.: Member(s) to share their research.
7 December 2012	Friday Help Session: 1-3 p.m. at the Main or Branch Library.

President's Message

I am always excited when I find cousins who are also researching my ancestral lines. Recently I saw that someone was researching my grandmother, Lena Juliana Marie (Longbella) Scharf on Ancestry.com. I had to go through Ancestry.com to contact this person and about a month later I got a response from Kaitlyn. It turns out that she is the daughter of a 1st cousin whom I have not seen in about 20 years. Kaitlyn is going to be a senior in college this Fall and though she had started her research by putting it on Ancestry.com's Private Trees, she wasn't able to continue the Ancestry.com subscription, thus she could not continue adding to her tree.

I happen to be going to my 50th High School Reunion in August and will get a chance to meet Kaitlyn and other family members. I will share with her my information and hope that she is able to continue with her interest in researching family history.

This tells me that the younger generation is indeed interested in researching their family history. I would suggest all of you who are reading this message to encourage the younger generation in your own family to get involved researching their family history. It would also be nice see a wider range of ages in the society membership.

I will reiterate my request to all members to take part in the help sessions we have at a branch of Mesa County Library on the 1st Friday of each month. Note again that you can come there for help in your own research or to help others.

I'm also requesting members to step up and volunteer to present your own research by describing the reasons you are researching and what you want do with it. You can tell which surnames you are researching and the places they lived. We have numerous instances where members of the society have found common ancestors and places. We still need members to volunteer for the evening meetings this Fall.
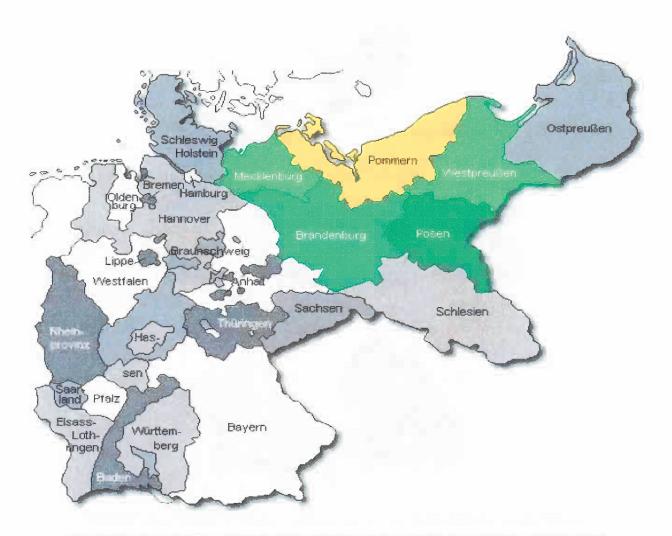
Dennis Jenkins, President, MCGS

Political Map of Europe

Political Map of Europe as it is Today

This political map of Europe can be found at: http://www.youreuropemap.com/europe_map_5.html

While it is outside the scope of this article, I recommend that you review a general history of Europe. There are excellent books such as the *Anchor Atlas of World History* that will provide you with a concise overview (*Doubleday Anchor LC-72- 90090* now out of print, but you can find copies through Amazon). Perhaps the most convenient way to quickly read a summary is to use Wikipedia. Both http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Europe and http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_history give a very helpful summary of the major events and are liberally illustrated with maps to provide a good overall feel. Once you have done this, precede on to the country of interest, in this case Germany, again using Wikipedia at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany. A really useful Wikipedia feature is the "hotlinks". Simply click on the blue hypertext and it will take you to a more detailed entry to explain what you are having trouble understanding or desire more detail about. When you are through reading that secondary page, simply hit "return" (or "enter") on your keyboard and it will return you to the main article. So, for example, if you want to learn more about a particular area of Germany, such as the State of Hesse, you click on the blue hypertext that says "Hesse" anywhere in the main article and it will take you to more information specifically about that State. When done studying that just hit "return" and you are taken back to the same spot in the main article that you left from.

The States of the German Empire following the Franco-Prussian Conflict of 1870-1871

This map of The States of the German Empire can be found at: http://www.genealogy.net/reg/regio.htm

As we proceed back in time, we observe from this general orientation in European and German history that borders change, and the composition of Germany as it exists today is based upon older, independent kingdoms that came together to form the modern countries of the German Empire of 1871, the Weimar Republic of 1919, The Third Reich, Divided Germany following World War II, and finally The Federal Republic of Germany, Bundesrepublik Deutschland, reunified in 1990. We understand that the current German States are themselves rich in a deep historical sense. We also begin to see why a particular ancestor may be indicated in some records as from "Germany", or the "German Empire", in other records "from Brandenburg", and still others as being "from Prussia". The proper place name is determined not only by "where we are", but also by "when we are". In the border areas with France, Denmark, Poland, and Austria, there are territories that are sometimes a part of Germany, other times administered by those neighbors. So, an ancestor might have left an area called Elsaß-Lothringen, Germany in the late 1800's. Today that same area would be known as (and some of the records would be located in) Alsace-Lorraine, France. Not confusing if you have a sense of European and German history, but important to keep in mind if your internet search terms include location names. Today, the internet can also be helpful in searching for those "period" or "historical" maps that help to make sense of these changing borders.

Today's Germany, Bundesrepublik Deutschland, following reunification of 1990

Map of Today's Germany, originally found at: www.genealogy.net

Other general orientation aids include Cyndi's List. The list was first created by Cyndi Howells as a short list of genealogy bookmarks that was shared with the members of the Tacoma-Pierce County Genealogical Society at their September 1995 meeting. The web site opened in March 1996; by the end of that year, it had more than 10,000 links. The internet portal for Cyndi's List entries for Germany is here: http://www.cyndislist.com/germany. Here, you will find numerous links to various aspects of doing research in Germany. Similar topics and links can be found for other European countries and family history research in general. It is an excellent site for general orientation.

Family History Centers used to have a series of Handbooks for various country research. These have now been largely supplanted by the new Family search web page. Scroll to the bottom of the page http://www.familysearch.org and click where it says "Browse Articles" under the category "Learn". Browse "Germany" on the page that comes up and you will be taken to an introductory page that will get you started on your German research.

Step 1: Finding the Home Village

Throughout Europe it is common to find the BMD records in ecclesiastical records at the parish level. This is different from the United States where those same records are commonly maintained by a county level courthouse. Because of this, it is essential to determine the point of emigration, the home village, or place of residence at the time of emigration to America. Here is a list of ideas you can use to research this very important point. While the examples are directed toward German research, a similar strategy will work with other countries as well.

1.) Family Records: Collect and review family records such as bibles, old photograph notations, letters, diaries and personal histories.

2.) The Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934: An example of emigration records, these lists contain the names of millions of Europeans who emigrated through Hamburg between 1850 and 1934, minus the war years of 1915-1919. Nearly one-third of the people who emigrated from central and Eastern Europe during this time are included on these lists. If you have ancestors who emigrated from these areas, the Hamburg passenger lists could provide important genealogical information about them, including their hometowns. Extensive indexes make these records easier to use than most other passenger lists and emigration records. Many of the records of other ports such as Bremen, Le Havre, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Antwerp were either destroyed or are not available through the Family History Library. More information on how to use these lists is available through Family History Library fiche 6000034, or Research Guide 34047, or the familysearch.org site previously mentioned.

3.) Immigration records: The naturalization documentation can be helpful in defining the home village. Examine both the immigrant's Declaration of Intent and Final Papers. Ship's manifests and passenger lists will sometimes contain information about the residence of the passenger at the time of their departure. The Ellis Island records (available on-line at www.ellisisland.org) cover the years for 1892 through 1924 and can be helpful if your ancestor arrived in the port of New York during these years. Always be alert to the possibility of surname spelling variations.

4.) Federal Census Reports: While the Federal Census Reports do not give the village name, they can be helpful in the following manner. In the 1900 and later Censuses, aliens and naturalized citizens are asked what year they immigrated. Knowing this year and that the person is of German origin allows us to use a reference series called *"Germans to America: Lists of Passengers Arriving at U.S. Ports 1850-1897 (Series I) and 1840's (Series II), edited by Ira A. Glazier and P. William Filby"*. The LDS Regional Family History Center in Mesa, Arizona and the main Family History Center in Salt Lake City, Utah both have complete sets of these books. If you have a name and a year, it is very simple to use. Simply take the volume for the year of interest and look in the index for that year for the individual, again trying various spellings if you don't succeed. If you find your ancestor listed it will give their name as written on the specific ship's passenger list, their age, their occupation, and sometimes the village of origin. It's not 100%, but is always worth a try. The good news is that this series includes many more ports than just New York. It covers Boston, Baltimore, New Orleans, etc. as well as New York. In both the case of *Germans to America* and the Ellis Island records, note who is traveling next to your ancestor in the records. People often traveled as groups of friends, neighbors, church members, and extended relatives. This can provide a clue. Sometimes you may be able to learn the home village's name from the later records of neighbors who emigrated from the same village.

5.): Death Certificate: Another source of information for the immigrant's residence and birthplace in Germany is their death certificate. Be aware that information here comes from a relative who is often in grief at the time that the information is provided. And the information recorded is often a phonetic spelling of the place name.

6.) Obituary: If you can locate the individual's obituary, it will often indicate their place of birth. There may also be other newspaper articles about the individual that may contain this information.

7.) Tombstone and Cemetery Sexton's Records: Tombstone and cemetery sexton's records can be a further source of information. In the Midwest, where I have done much of my research, I have seen tombstones that give not only

the dates of birth and death, but also the place of birth. Even when it's not on the memorial itself, you may find such information in the sexton's records for that cemetery.

8.) Marriage Record: If your ancestor married after their immigration in the United States, the marriage record may indicate place of birth.

9.) County Histories: Here's a source that many people miss, namely, County Histories. I've had some luck in locating personal history information in the various County Histories that were typically published in the latter part of the 19th Century, particularly in the Midwest where many of the German immigrants settled. In addition to defining the village of origin for settlers, there is often other useful genealogical information regarding the family and descendants down to the time of publication.

10.) International Genealogical Index: The International Genealogical Index prepared by LDS can be of help. This index is now rolled into other databases for on-line search at the website www.familysearch.org. If someone else has researched your family line, you may find an entry for the immigrant's place and date of birth. Keep in mind that there may be more than one individual with the same name.

11.) Internet Searches: General internet searches using search engines like Google, Yahoo, Duck Duck Go, etc. can sometimes lead to work that others have done on your family tree. There are new databases being added to the net all the time. I just recently found an archive for the German state of Thüringen that contained an emigration record for a great-grandfather. The data had only been posted in January of this year and represented information that I had all but given up on ever knowing. I got there by simply doing a general search based on his name.

12.) Databases: Ancestry.com's One World Tree, the Rootsweb WorldConnect Project, and other large databases containing the uploaded GEDCOM's of other researchers can be helpful. However, take the results as "clues" and not as "proven facts". For reliable conclusions, take the time to confirm these results with original source records.

13.) Occupation: Knowledge of the occupation of the person of interest can lead to occupational records that will sometimes give the place of birth. For example, in the Midwest there are books published celebrating "century farms", homesteads settled and farmed by a single family for over a hundred years. These books will sometimes tell you where the immigrant who homesteaded the land was from.

14.) Church Records: Church records for the church your ancestors joined after their immigration may provide a place of birth or a connection to the place of residence at the time of emigration. The new local pastor wanted to know where the original birth or marriage records were kept and often referenced that in his notes and records.

15.) Emigration Index: Normally, you will work your way back from the United States to Europe. However, in some cases there are published indexed lists of emigrants that left a particular state. The emigration records for the Kingdom of Württemberg are an example. Finding an ancestor on the list allows you to define the village of origin.

So, there are over a dozen ideas for how to determine the village of origin in Germany for an ancestor. It's always nice when several sources confirm the same information, building credibility for our work. It also helps to ensure that we have the proper location as well as the proper name. Particularly with smaller villages, there can be multiple locations with the same name. Even with larger cities it can sometimes be confusing, such as Frankfurt am Main and Frankfurt am Oder, distinguished by which river they are located on.

To review, we have seen the importance of establishing the historical context for our research and have taken the first step to define the location where we hope to access the actual records for our ancestors. Next issue we will present where and how we can access those records to define the important events of those ancestors' lives, discuss strategies for overcoming the language barrier, and make some suggestions about where else you can look for information. *Article written by Larry Eucher, 11 July 2012*

German Society and Culture

A Planning Culture

- In many respects, Germans can be considered the masters of planning.
- This is a culture that prizes forward thinking and knowing what they will be doing at a specific time on a specific day.
- Careful planning, in one's business and personal life, provides a sense of security.
- Rules and regulations allow people to know what is expected and plan their life accordingly.
- Once the proper way to perform a task is discovered, there is no need to think of doing it any other way.
- Germans believe that maintaining clear lines of demarcation between people, places, and things is the surest way to lead a structured and ordered life.
- Work and personal lives are rigidly divided.
- There is a proper time for every activity. When the business day ends, you are expected to leave the office. If you must remain after normal closing, it indicates that you did not plan your day properly.

The German Home

- Germans take great pride in their homes.
- They are kept neat and tidy at all times, with everything in its appointed place.
- In a culture where most communication is rather formal, the home is the place where one can relax and allow your individualism to shine.
- Only close friends and relatives are invited into the sanctity of the house, so it is the one place where more informal communication may occur.
- There are many unwritten rules surrounding the outward maintenance of one's home.
- It is imperative that common areas such as sidewalks, pavements, corridors (in apartments), and steps be kept clean at all times.

From the Website, Germany – German Culture, Customs and Business Etiquette from http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/germany-country-profile.html 10 July 2012.

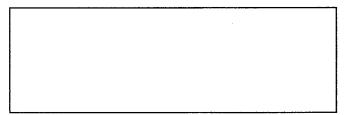Here are a few more websites that may be of interest:

The Sidney Heitman Germans from Russia collections – German-Russians in Colorado
This website if from Colorado State University and is a combined effort between Saratov State University in the Saratov Province, Russia and the Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. The collection documents early migration to Colorado, settlements, religious and family matters, occupations, and social mobility. Formats include books, journal articles, oral history tapes and transcripts, and photographs, etc. A full text finding aid for the collection is available online at http://lib.colostate.edu/gfr/.

Historic World City Maps - Find maps of historic cities on the website for Historic Cities Center, Department of Geography, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library. This site contains maps, books and other relevant material concerning the past, present and future of historic cities.
Website is: http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il:80/north_europe/north_europe.html

Submitted by Kathie Vlahos, 13 July 2012

P.O. Box 1506
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81502-1506

Answer Key

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              ¹I        ²O  B  ³I   T  U  ⁴A  R  Y
               A            N          N
        ⁵M  A  N  I  F  E  S  T          C
               R            E  ⁶S  E  X  T  O  N        ⁷V
        ⁸D  E  E  D         N     S              ⁹G  I
                           T     T  ¹⁰M  I  G  R  A  N  T  S
   ¹¹M  A  ¹²P  S              ¹³T     O            Z  A
            A              ¹⁴M  I  C  R  O  F  I  C  H  E  L
¹⁵P  E  N  S  I  O  N          M                    T
R           S              ¹⁶P  E  E  R  A  G  ¹⁷E  ¹⁸G  E  D  ¹⁹C  O  ²⁰M
O           P     ²¹S          L              P        E  H  A
B        ²²O  C  C  U  P  A  T  I  O  N        I        R  U  T
A           R     R           N              T        R  E
T           T     N  ²³A  ²⁴E  M  I  G  R  A  N  T        C  R
E                 A     R                  P        H  N
                  M  ²⁵C  E  ²⁶N  O  T  A  P  H          A
                  E     H     E                          L
                  I     I     E
                  V
              ²⁷A  N  E  C  D  O  T  E
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The Answer Key to the Genealogy Crossword Puzzle from Mesa Dwellers Quarterly, June 2012, Issue 2.
Submitted by Larry Eucher, June 2012