

# German Genealogy Resources

## Introduction

Before beginning your search for your German ancestors, it is necessary to know where they came from – not just the area, but the town. When I began researching my German ancestors, I was lucky enough to be given copies of family papers that included birth dates and places. I also received help from distant cousins who had already done some research on our common lines. Taking the information I had to the local Family History Center, I was able to order microfilms of church records and censuses and trace these families further back than I had ever expected. Some of these records are now available online, as well as some additional records that were not available on microfilm.

Any expertise I may have is limited to the areas my ancestors came from – Schleswig-Holstein and Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

## Helpful Hints

Surnames that seem very unusual in the United States may turn out to be extremely common in Germany.

Since the records will be in German, it is extremely useful to take the time to study the language, either in a classroom setting or on your own.

## Publications

*In Search of Your German Roots* by Angus Baxter

Provides thorough coverage of all areas of Europe that German-speaking ancestors may have come from.

*Finding Your German Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide* by Kevin Hansen

A good, basic beginner's book.

*Map Guide to German Parish Registers* by Kevin Hansen

This is a series that will eventually cover all of Germany. Each volume contains maps of the parishes – both Lutheran and Catholic – for the area covered, making it easy to determine what parish your ancestor's town would have belonged to.

*German Church Books: Beyond the Basics* by Kenneth L. Smith

Does exactly what the title says in helping the researcher to analyze church records, and wring every bit of information from the records.

*German-English Genealogical Dictionary* by Ernst Thode

While much of the German you encounter can be translated using any good German dictionary, there are many terms – such as occupations – that cannot be found there, but are included here.

## Online Resources

Cyndi's List: Germany/Deutschland ~ <http://www.cyndislist.com/germany.htm>

The German Genealogy Network ~ <http://www.genealogy.net/genealogy.html>

Germany GenWeb ~ <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wggerman/>

A Genealogical Handbook of German Research ~

[http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Search/rg/guide/Ger\\_BMD\\_RefDoc\\_HandbookGermanResearch11.asp](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Search/rg/guide/Ger_BMD_RefDoc_HandbookGermanResearch11.asp)

## *Online Databases*

*FamilySearch.org* ~ <http://www.familysearch.org>

Germany Births and Baptisms, 1558-1898  
Germany Deaths and Burials, 1582-1958  
Germany Marriages, 1558-1929  
Germany, Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1890 (images)  
Germany, Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1900 (images)

*Ancestry.com* ~ <http://www.ancestry.com>

Mecklenburg, Germany, Parish Register Transcripts, 1876-1918 (browse only)  
Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1819  
Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1867  
Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1890  
Mecklenburg-Schwerin Census, 1900  
Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850-1934

Many additional databases are also available on both FamilySearch and Ancestry – these are the ones that I have used and found helpful. Because they were created from German records, these databases are in German.

However, remember that not everything is online. But many records are available on microfilm through the Family History Library. In the future they may also be available online – many (but not all) of the records I first accessed on microfilm are now available online.

## *Schleswig-Holstein*

### *Maps*

Schleswig-Holstein 1882 ~ <http://www.feefhs.org/maplibrary/german/gw-schl.html>

Rootdigger: Maps of Schleswig-Holstein ~ <http://www.rootdigger.de/Maps.htm>

### *Names*

Cyndi's List: Names ~ <http://www.cyndislist.com/names.htm>

The Last Name Game ~ <http://www.ancestry.com/learn/library/article.aspx?article=8216>

Rootdigger: Names ~ <http://www.rootdigger.de/Names.htm>

A Genealogical Handbook of German Research: Naming Practices ~

[http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Search/rg/guide/Ger\\_BMD\\_RefDoc\\_HandbookGermanResearch11.asp#chapter\\_12\\_naming\\_practices\\_\(patronymics\\_and\\_occupational\)](http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Search/rg/guide/Ger_BMD_RefDoc_HandbookGermanResearch11.asp#chapter_12_naming_practices_(patronymics_and_occupational))

### *Plattdeutsch*

Plattdeutsch is the dialect of Low German spoken in Schleswig-Holstein. While most records you find will be written in more formal German, you may occasionally run across letters or other documents in Plattdeutsch.

Plattdeutsch: How do I spell thee? ~ <http://members.tripod.com/~FolkHart/platspel3.html>

Plattmaster's Homepage ~ <http://www.plattmaster.de/startenglish.htm>

### *Web Resources*

Schleswig-Holstein-Roots Mailing List ~ <http://lists.rootsweb.com/index/intl/DEU/SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN-ROOTS.html>

Schleswig-Holstein-Roots-L FAQ ~ <http://www.genealogy-sh.com/faq-sh-roots/>

American Schleswig-Holstein Heritage Society ~ <http://www.ashhs.org/>

Rootdigger: Genealogy in Schleswig-Holstein ~ <http://www.rootdigger.de/index.htm>

Dansk Demografisk Database ~ [http://www.ddd.dda.dk/ddd\\_en.htm](http://www.ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm)

### *Mecklenburg-Schwerin*

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern GenWebsite ~ <http://www.emecklenburg.de/Mecklenburg/en/allhelp.html>