INTRODUCTION TO GERMAN RESEARCH

More so than anywhere else in the world...

- You need to know the place of origin
- The time frame of immigration
- The jurisdiction in power
- Religion

German records??

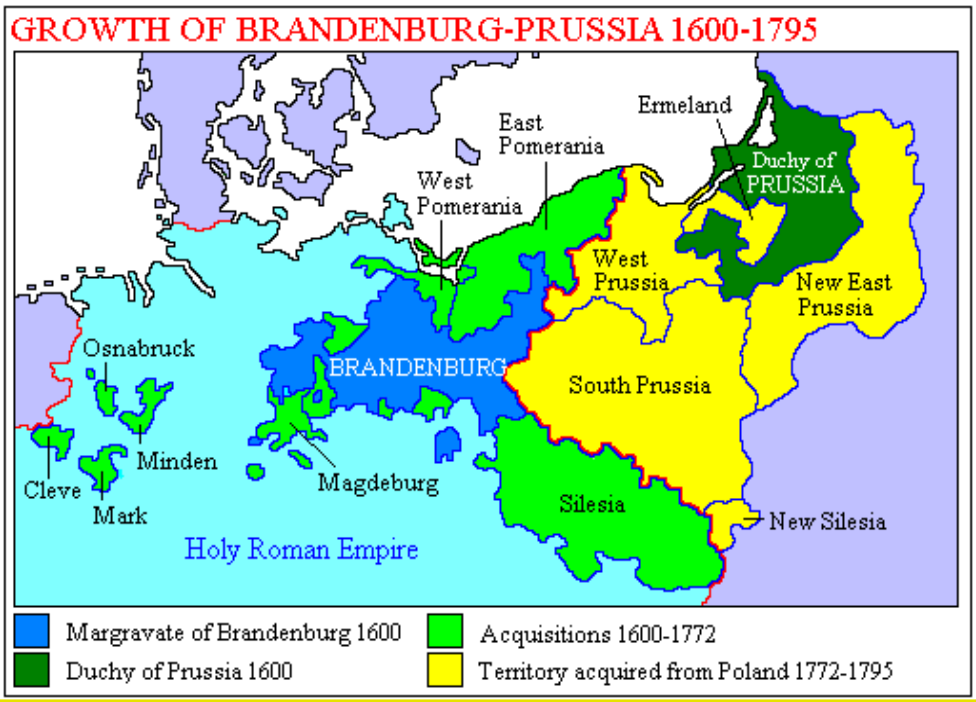
- Germany
- Prussia
- Austria
- Poland
- Bohemia
- Slovenia
- Czech Republic
- Low Countries
- Brandenburg
- Swabia
- Holy Roman Empire
- Pomerania
- Silesia
- Weimar Republic
- German Confederation
- Holy Roman Empire
- Switzerland
- Third Reich
- Eastern France
- Northern Italy

Imperial Circles

of the

Holy Roman Empire

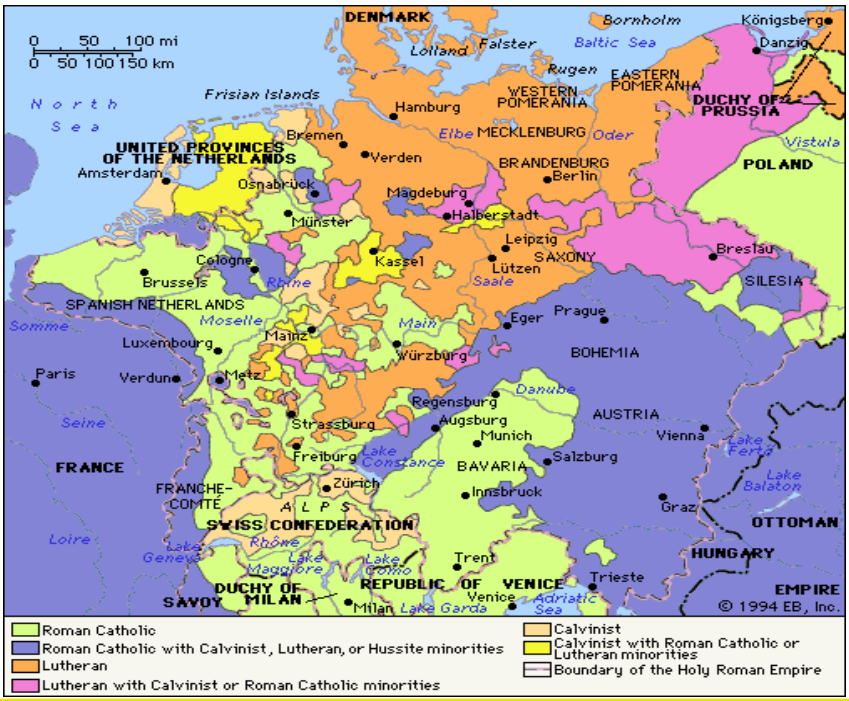
~1560



1871
Unification of
German States

(c) Bibliographisches Institut & F. A. Brockhaus AG, 2001

RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY



BRIEF GENEALOGICAL TIMELINE

- 800 – Charlemagne crowned emperor of HRE
- 1517 – Martin Luther sparks Protestant Reformation
- 1563 – Catholic Church begins recording BMBs
- 1598 – Edicts of Nantes – Toleration of Protestants
- 1648 – Ending of 30 Years War
- 1685 – Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (Huguenots flee)
- 1762-1800 – Catherine invites Germans to Russia
- 1794 – Napoleon requires civil registration in conquered German states

Brief Genealogical Timeline

- 1848 – Frankfurt Constitution fails – ~8K political refugees flee to England and North America
- 1871 – Bismark unifies Germany into a nation-state
- 1914-1918 – WWI
- 1918 – Influenza pandemic (~50 million die worldwide)
- 1939-1945 – WWII
- 1990 – Reunification of East and West Germany

Some Background Details

- Germany was made up of different kingdoms, duchies, and Prussian provinces
- Within these areas, emigration records were usually kept on a county seat or district level of government
- In North American colonial times, *naturalization* most often meant the person was from a German-speaking country

Some Background Details

- The first permanent German settlement in America was Germantown, Pennsylvania, which was settled in 1683.
- The Pennsylvania "Dutch" is a misnomer (Deutsch)
- They were not highly mobile when they arrived
- Germanic immigration is usually divided into two major groups: first wave and second wave. Sometimes called "boats"

First Wave

- Began with 17th century immigrants through the 18th century
- Mostly from southwestern parts of Modern Germany (Pfalz, Saarland, Baden, Württemberg, Alsace)
- Mostly extended families or identifiable groups (clusters), or serial migration (one followed by others)
- Often followed the Rhine River to the Netherlands and left from Rotterdam via London (hired by Royal Navy)

First Wave

- Ended up in upstate New York or Pennsylvania
- About 80% immigrated through Philadelphia
- Many were indentured
- Most came for economic opportunities
  - Lots of cheap land
  - Not yet driven by weariness of war
  - Unlikely to be nobles (inspite of “von” in surname)
- Some were escaping religious persecution
- Many fled illegally to escape “exit taxes”

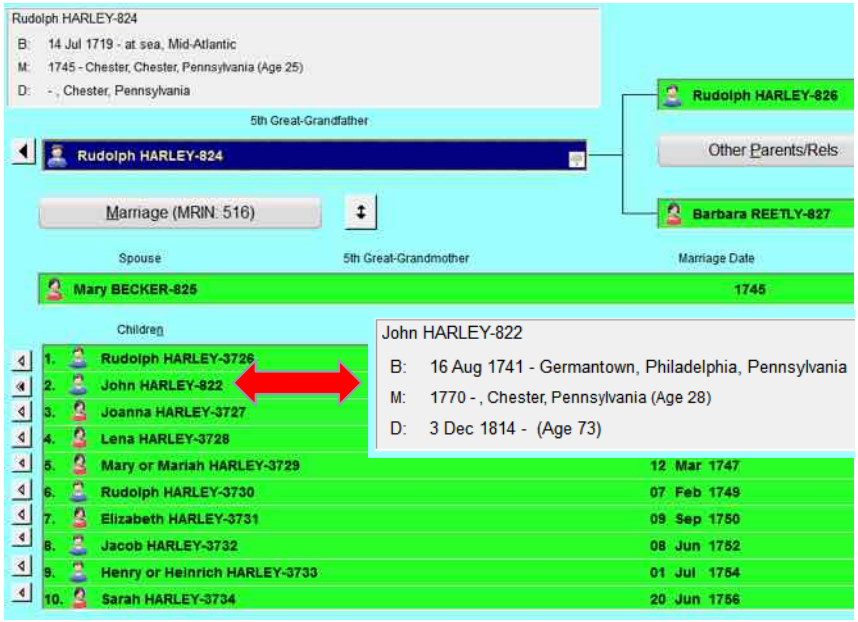
Second Wave

- Covers 1800 to 1920 (over 5 million immigrants)
- Mostly individuals or single families
- From the north and east of German regions
- Migrated over other rivers to Bremerhaven and Hamburg
- Escaping the horrors of war

SECOND WAVE

- Leap frogged over descendants of first wavers
- More industrial entrepreneurs
- Even split between Protestants and Roman Catholics
- Many fed up with political trends in Europe

FIRST OR SECOND WAVE?



First or Second Wave?

Where to Start?

- To trace your ancestors in German records, you must know the town of birth.
- Even if you already have a place name, keep in mind that:
  - The jurisdiction of the place changed hands resulting in a different name
  - The place may have been swallowed up by the growth of a larger, neighboring city
  - Phonetic spelling can disguise the actual spelling
  - Place names are used multiple times throughout the region

DO THIS FIRST

- Scour your state-side information:
  - Validate your connection to a “German” ancestor
  - Identify the immigrant ancestor(s)
  - Identify the earliest known spelling of the surname
  - Avoid getting hung up on spelling variations
  - Look for some signatures

DO THIS FIRST

- Scour your state-side information:
  - Identify all family members (not just direct line)
  - Look for extended family members
  - Gather every possible scrap of information
  - Especially focus on immigration details
  - Watch for exceptions

Naming Patterns

- Boys
  1. Father's father
  2. Mother's father
  3. Father
  4+ Uncles

Two names: Baptismal name of Johannes or Johann, plus a second name used on records.

Example: Johann Peter

- Girls
  1. Father's mother
  2. Mother's mother
  3. Mother
  4+ Aunts

Two names: Baptismal name of Maria, or Anna, or Anna Maria, plus a second name used on records.

Example: Maria Bridget

Places to Look

- Family Sources:
  - Family Histories
  - Diaries
  - Personal Journals
  - Wills
  - Letters
  - Religious certificates and documents

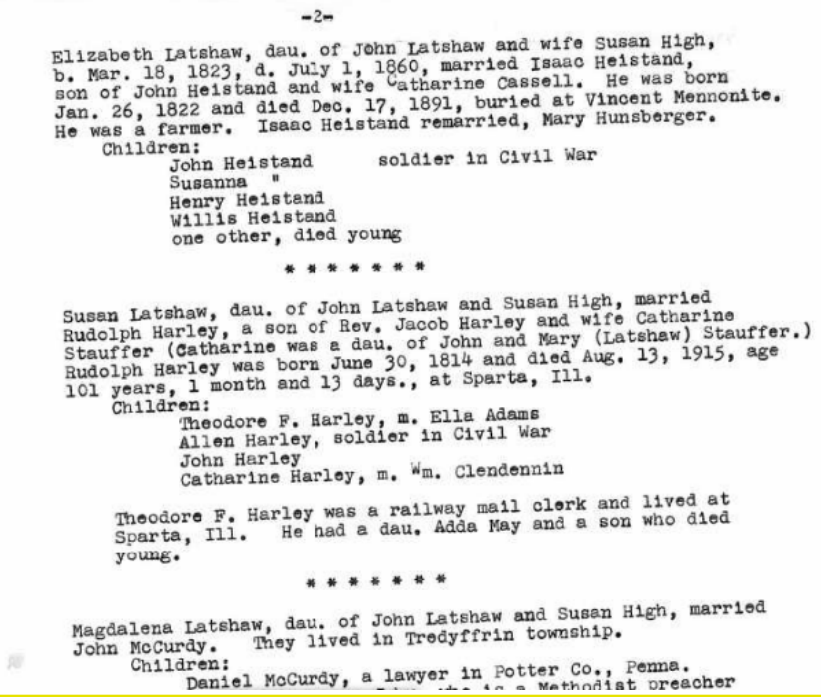
Places to Look

- Family Bibles
- Obituaries
- Immigration documents
- Naturalization documents
- Land records
- Military records and memorabilia
- Occupation documents

Places to Look

- Check with local libraries and historical societies. Many family records were donated to their collections.
- Newspapers
- U.S. Census records
- Ethnic and social societies
- Cemetery records
- Surname history

Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Church and Town Records, 1708-1985



-2-

Elizabeth Latshaw, dau. of John Latshaw and wife Susan High, b. Mar. 18, 1823, d. July 1, 1860, married Isaac Heistand, son of John Heistand and wife Catharine Cassell. He was born Jan. 26, 1822 and died Dec. 17, 1891, buried at Vincent Mennonite. He was a farmer. Isaac Heistand remarried, Mary Hunsberger.

Children:
John Heistand soldier in Civil War
Susanna "
Henry Heistand
Willis Heistand
one other, died young

* * * * * * *

Susan Latshaw, dau. of John Latshaw and Susan High, married Rudolph Harley, a son of Rev. Jacob Harley and wife Catharine Stauffer (Catharine was a dau. of John and Mary (Latshaw) Stauffer.) Rudolph Harley was born June 30, 1814 and died Aug. 13, 1915, age 101 years, 1 month and 13 days., at Sparta, Ill.

Children:
Theodore F. Harley, m. Ella Adams
Allen Harley, soldier in Civil War
John Harley
Catharine Harley, m. Wm. Clendennin

Theodore F. Harley was a railway mail clerk and lived at Sparta, Ill. He had a dau. Adda May and a son who died young.

* * * * * * *

Magdalena Latshaw, dau. of John Latshaw and Susan High, married John McCurdy. They lived in Tredyffrin township.

Children:
Daniel McCurdy, a lawyer in Potter Co., Penna.

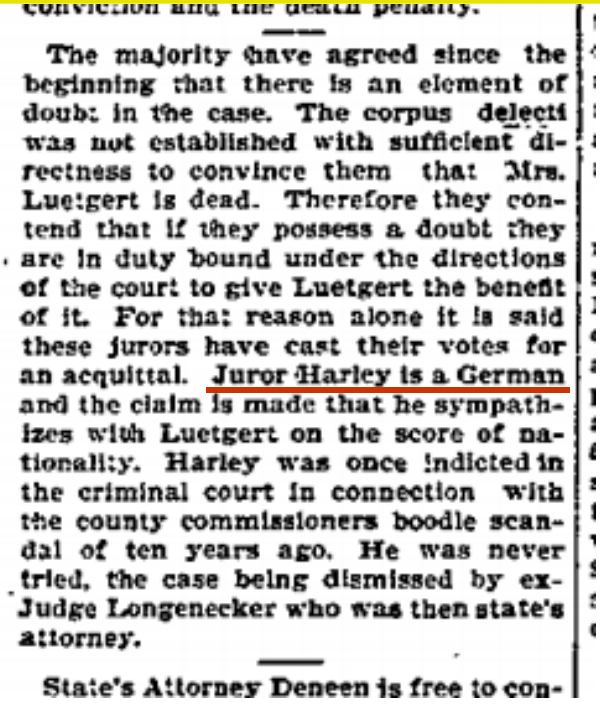
ELIMINATE AS MUCH UNCERTAINTY AS POSSIBLE

SEARCH U.S RECORDS

Newspapers and Periodicals

- The *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals 1732-1955* lists many helpful sources for locating newspapers and periodicals that might list your ancestor's name
- Genealogybank.com
- Newspaperarchive.com
- Archive.com
- ChroniclingAmerica.com
- Ancestry.com
- Familysearch.org

Oshkosh Daily Northwestern
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
October 20, 1897
Page 1



conviction and the death penalty.

The majority have agreed since the beginning that there is an element of doubt in the case. The corpus delecti was not established with sufficient directness to convince them that Mrs. Luetgert is dead. Therefore they contend that if they possess a doubt they are in duty bound under the directions of the court to give Luetgert the benefit of it. For that reason alone it is said these jurors have cast their votes for an acquittal. Juror Harley is a German and the claim is made that he sympathizes with Luetgert on the score of nationality. Harley was once indicted in the criminal court in connection with the county commissioners boodle scandal of ten years ago. He was never tried, the case being dismissed by ex-Judge Longenecker who was then state's attorney.

State's Attorney Deneen is free to con-

SEARCH U.S RECORDS

Naturalization Records

- Naturalization records were kept by counties before 1906
- Federal government thereafter
- These include:
  - Application or Declaration of Intention
  - Oath of Allegiance
  - Final Petition

Biographical Sketches

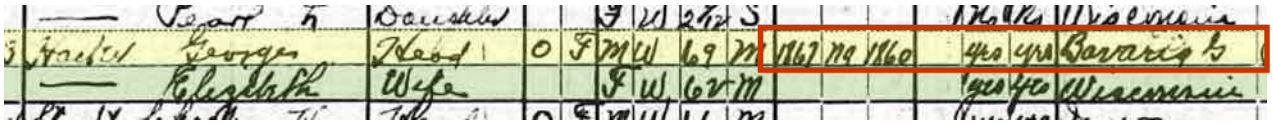
- Biographical Sketches may provide date or place of birth and family information.

SEARCH U.S RECORDS

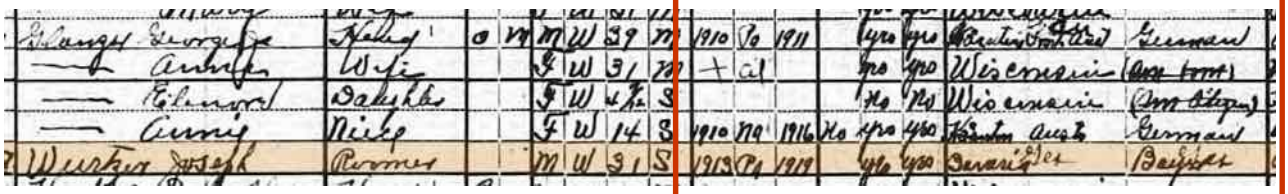
U.S. Census Records

- Pre-nominal – tally of foreigners (1790-1830)
- 1850-1860 – place of birth
- 1870 – parents foreign born?
- 1880 – parents birthplace
- 1900 – year of immigration
- 1910 – name of language
- 1920 – status and year of naturalization
- 1930 – language before immigration

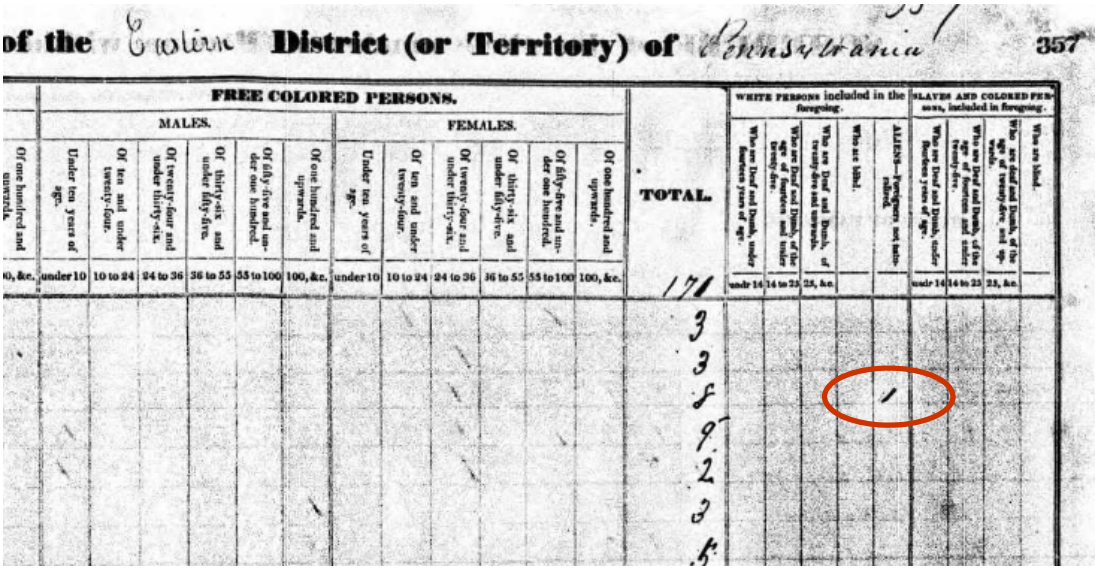
1920 Census, Wisconsin, Trempealeau, Arcadia, District 0203



On the same page



1830 Census, Pennsylvania, Berks, Bern, Page 10

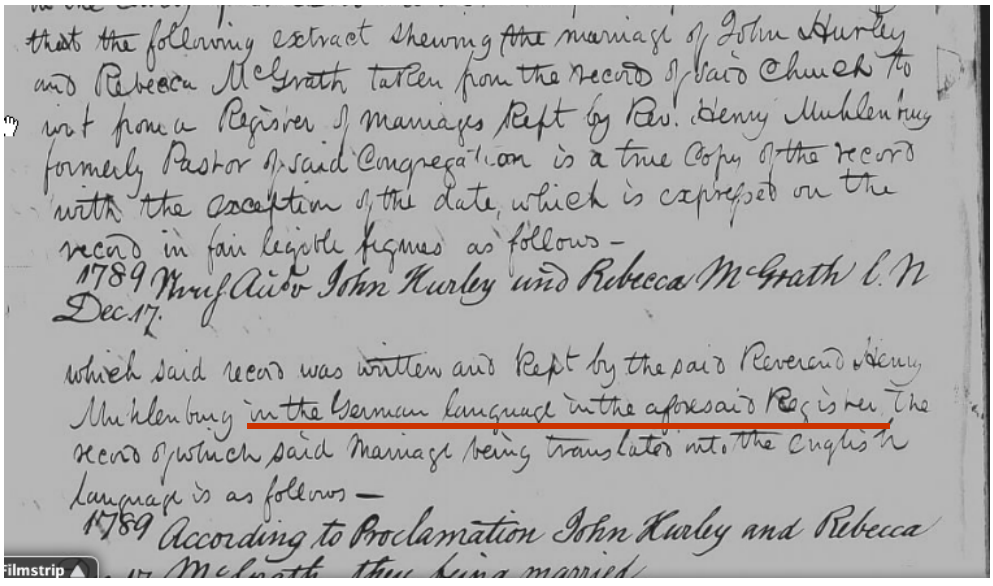


SEARCH U.S RECORDS

U.S. Military Records

- The place of origin may be listed in the following military records:
  - Enlistment.
  - Discharge.
  - Pension Records
    - Invalid
    - Widow
    - Dependent

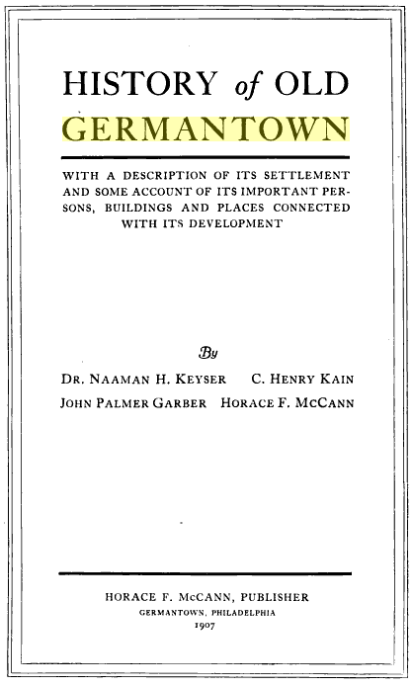
An affidavit found in the Revolutionary War widow's pension file for Rebecca Hurley, widow of John Hurley, Pennsylvania


that the following extract shewing the marriage of John Hurley
and Rebecca McGrath taken from the record of said Church to
wit from a Register of marriages kept by Rev. Henry Muhlenburg
formerly Pastor of said Congregation is a true Copy of the record
with the exception of the date, which is expressed on the
record in fair legible figures as follows –
1789 Nuf Aud John Hurley and Rebecca McGrath l. N
Dec 17.
which said record was written and kept by the said Reverend Henry
Muhlenburg in the German language in the aforesaid Register, the
record of which said marriage being translated into the English
language is as follows –
1789 According to Proclamation John Hurley and Rebecca
McGrath they being married

SEARCH U.S RECORDS

Locality Histories

- Local histories sometimes provide a place of origin
- City histories give the origin of prominent citizens, and county histories show where German settlers came from.



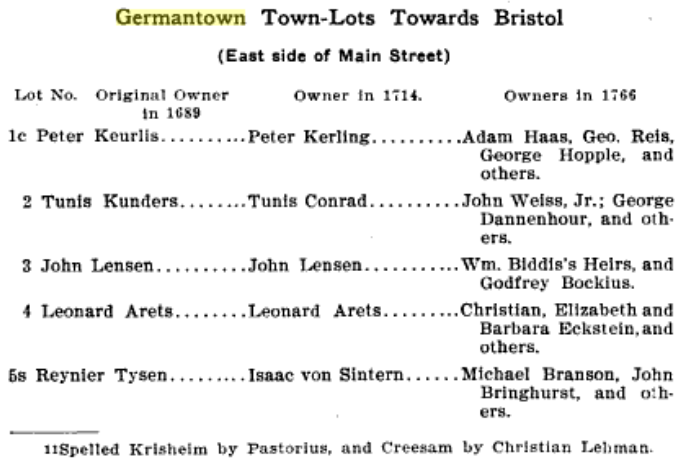
HISTORY *of* OLD
GERMANTOWN

WITH A DESCRIPTION OF ITS SETTLEMENT AND SOME ACCOUNT OF ITS IMPORTANT PERSONS, BUILDINGS AND PLACES CONNECTED WITH ITS DEVELOPMENT

By

DR. NAAMAN H. KEYSER C. HENRY KAIN
JOHN PALMER GARBER HORACE F. McCANN

HORACE F. McCANN, PUBLISHER
GERMANTOWN, PHILADELPHIA
1907



Germantown Town-Lots Towards Bristol

(East side of Main Street)

Lot No.	Original Owner in 1689	Owner in 1714.	Owners in 1766
1c	Peter Keurlis.....	Peter Kerling.....	Adam Haas, Geo. Reis, George Hopple, and others.
2	Tunis Kunders.....	Tunis Conrad.....	John Weiss, Jr.; George Dannenhour, and others.
3	John Lensen.....	John Lensen.....	Wm. Biddis's Heirs, and Godfrey Bockius.
4	Leonard Arets.....	Leonard Arets.....	Christian, Elizabeth and Barbara Eckstein, and others.
5s	Reynier Tysen.....	Isaac von Sintern.....	Michael Branson, John Bringhurst, and others.

[11] Spelled Krisheim by Pastorius, and Creesam by Christian Lehman.

[12] The original 13 settlers were no doubt allowed to retain the land first assigned them, for after the final division, they are found to be located together at the southern end of the village on both sides of the main road.

most surely reflect character.

Francis Daniel Pastorius, son of Melchior and Magdalena Pastorius, was born at Sommerhausen, September 26, 1651. His sponsors in baptism were Daniel Gering, Doctor of Law at Leghitz, and Franciscus Freyherr, of Limburg, from whom, of course, his Christian names were derived. According to custom these sponsors gave him presents, one of them conferring on him "a scarlet coat, a little sword, a hat with a feather and little white boots." "Thus," as Pastorius commented in later years, "making a fool of me in my tender years."

At the age of eleven he was sent to a gymnasium at Windheim, the teacher of which, Tobias Schumberg, knew no German, so that his pupils were obliged to converse with him in Latin. This indicates that his education in tongues, in the knowledge of which he afterwards excelled, was begun early. On July 31, 1668, he entered a school at Altdorf, and on August 11, 1670, he went to the University of Strasburg, where he com-

CHECK SURNAME BOOKS AND NAME INDEXES

If the ancestor's surname is uncommon, it may be possible to find it listed in a German surname book. These books identify the earliest date, place, and person by that surname

The following are German surname books:

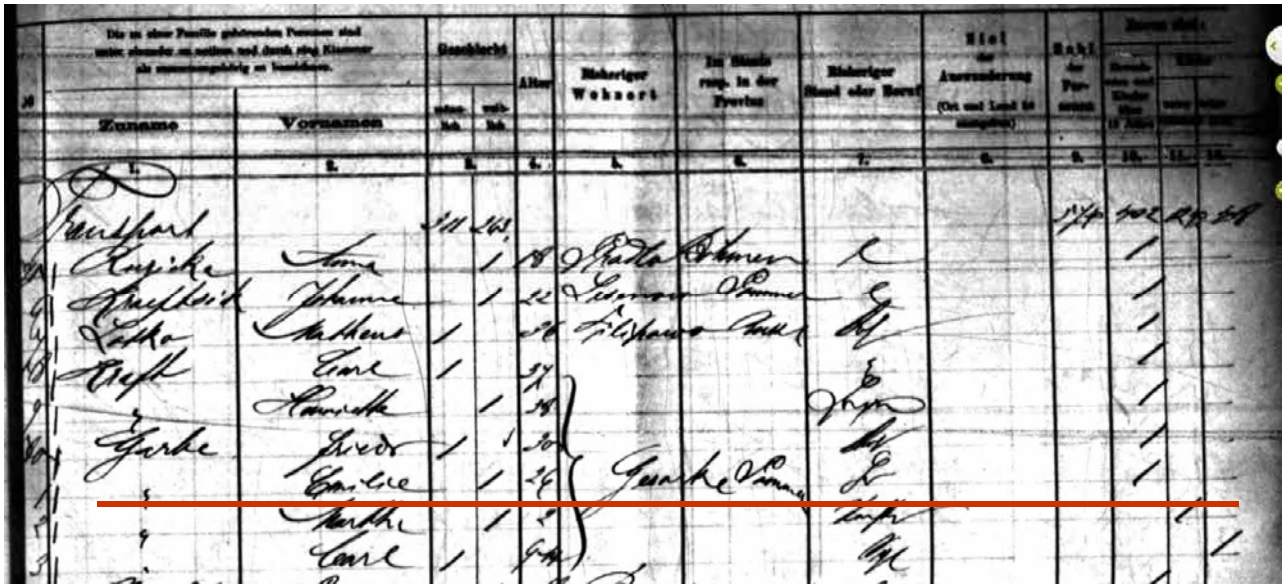
- Brechenmacher, Josef Karlmann. *Deutsche Sippennamen*.
- *Familiengeschichtliche Quellen.*
- *Quellenschau für Familienforscher*.

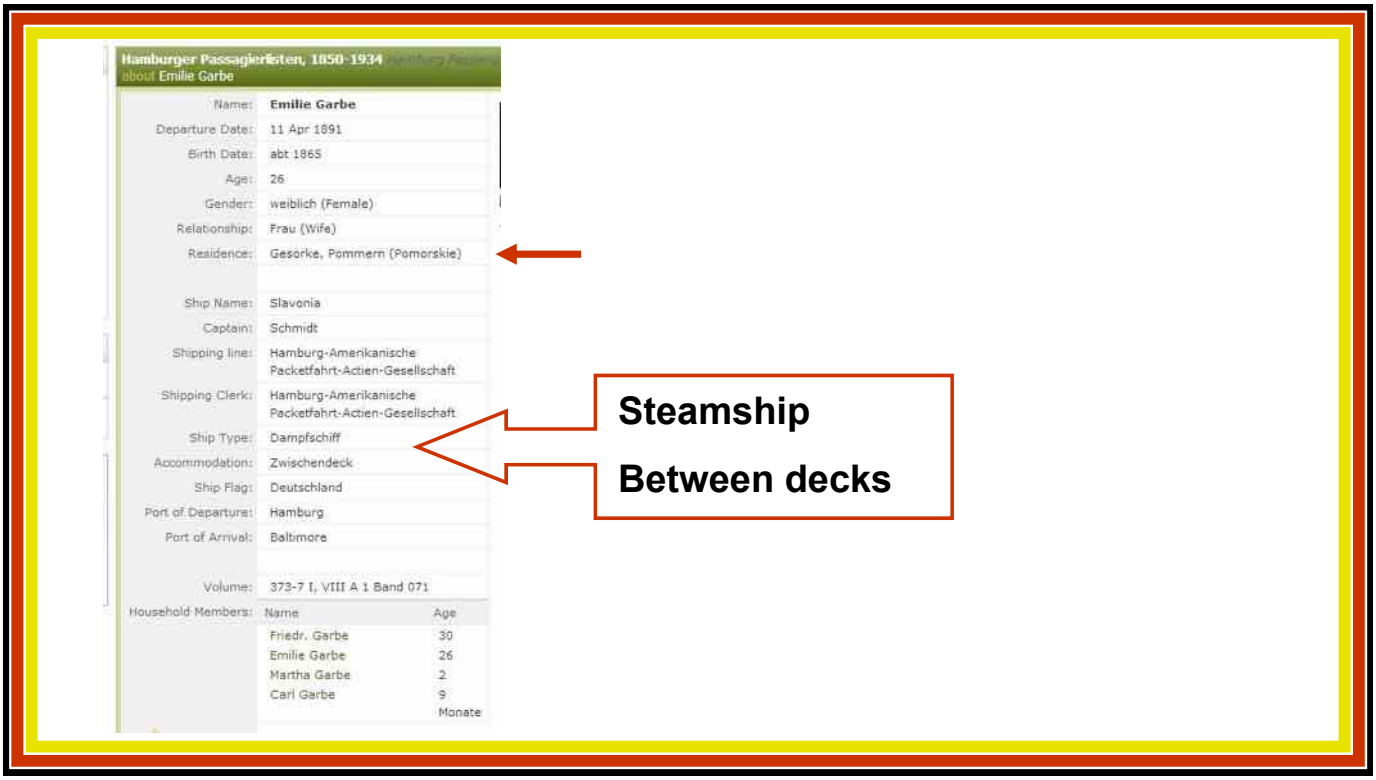
SEARCH IMMIGRATION RECORDS

Hamburg Passenger Lists

- The Hamburg Passenger Lists include the last foreign residence of people leaving from Hamburg. There are two lists:
  - The *Direct Passenger List* (1850 to 1934) lists those who left Hamburg and went directly to their destination.
  - The *Indirect Passenger List* (1850 to 1910) shows those who left Hamburg, went to another port, and then on to their destination. After 1910 the indirect list is included with the Direct Passenger List.

Hamburg Passenger Lists




Hamburger Passagierlisten, 1850-1934
about Emilie Garbe
Name: Emilie Garbe
Departure Date: 11 Apr 1891
Birth Date: abt 1865
Age: 26
Gender: weiblich (Female)
Relationship: Frau (Wife)
Residence: Gesorke, Pommern (Pomorskie)
Ship Name: Slavonia
Captain: Schmidt
Shipping line: Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt-Actien-Gesellschaft
Shipping Clerk: Hamburg-Amerikanische Packetfahrt-Actien-Gesellschaft
Ship Type: Dampfschiff
Accommodation: Zwischendeck
Ship Flag: Deutschland
Port of Departure: Hamburg
Port of Arrival: Baltimore
Volume: 373-7 I, VIII A 1 Band 071
Household Members: Name Age
Friedr. Garbe 30
Emilie Garbe 26
Martha Garbe 2
Carl Garbe 9 Monate
Steamship
Between decks

Emilie Garbe, "United States Germans to America Index, 1850-1897"
Name: Emilie Garbe
Event Type: Immigration
Event Date: 28 Apr 1891
Event Place: Baltimore, Baltimore, Maryland, United States
Gender: Female
Age: 26
Birthplace: Prussia
Occupation: Wife
Ship Name: Slavonia
Birth Year (Estimated): 1865
Departure Port: Hamburg
Literacy: Unknown
Last Place of Residence: Stolp
Destination Place: Baltimore
Transit or Travel Compartment: Staying in the USA [Transit]; Steerage [Travel]
Affiliate Manifest ID: 00016347
Affiliate Publication Title: Germans to America Passenger Data file, 1850-1897
Affiliate ARC Identifier: 1746067

Emilie Garbe

Age 26 in 1891

Born about 1865 in Prussia

Residence: Stolp

Last residence: Gesorke, Pommern

Dep. Hamburg 11 Apr 1891

Arr. Baltimore 28 Apr 1891

Using a Google search, I found…

The town Gesorke

in the former rural community Lojow in Stolp county

General

Gesorke was at the beginning of the 1930ies a town in the rural community Lojow in the former Stolp county in Pomerania

Population

The last time official statistical data with number of inhabitants and of residential buildings were printed in the Gemeindelexikon 1905/06.

Administration

The town Gesorke gehörte zum Bezirk des Amtsgerichts in Stolp. Das zuständige Arbeitsgericht war in Stolp.

Genealogy

Pommernkontakte project

Into the Pommernkontakte ("Pomerania contacts") no members have made records for Gesorke so far. But for the entire rural county Stolp there are already 901 different researchers subscribed.
The project Pommernkontakte, that exists since 2001, is a public and free accessible directory of Pomeranian genealogists wordwide. The purpose is to bring the researchers together, promote information exchange and possibly find lost or new relatives.
In case that you have information about ancestors from Gesorke yourself, you should sign up to Pommernkontakte free of charge and submit it. That way you can be found by others interested in these families.

Pommern-L mailing list ('distribution list')

An electronic mailing list allows to put specific questions to at the beginning still unknown genealogists in the same area and to get research hints, to share information or to just benefit from the knowledge and experiences of other researchers. The mailing list Pommern-L deals with genealogy and history of Pomerania and offers also for the reseachers in the town Gesorke a board. The membership is totally free. After subscription to Pommern-L one can read the new messages and write there, but even reading the sent and archived messages might be very helpful too.

Einwohnerdaten

Bibliography

1. Gemeindelexikon für den Freistaat Preußen. Provinz Pommern. Nach dem endgültigen Ergebnis der Volkszählung vom 16. Juni 1925 und anderen amtlichen Quellen unter Zugrundelegung des Gebietsstandes vom 1. Oktober 1932. *Berlin: Preußisches Statistisches Landesamt, 1932*. p. 85

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This page is part of the information system for Pomerania.

MODERN JURISDICTIONS

- Amt – Local governmental offices
- Bezirk – District
- Gemeinde – municipality or parish
- Kreis – similar to a U.S. county
- Kreishaupmannschaft – group of counties
- Land – equivalent to a U.S. state
- Stadt – City
- Staat – State
- Regierungsbezirk – similar to a land (in some areas)

Historical Jurisdictions

- Reich – Empire
- Reichstadt – Free imperial city in the HRE
- Rittergut – knight's estate
- Provinz – Prussian state
- Fuerstentum – Principality
- Grafschaft – County
- Grossherzogtum – Grand duchy
- Herrschaft – Manor
- Herzogtum – Duchy
- Koenigreich – Kingdom
- Kurfuerstum - Principality

Check Passenger Lists or Port Records

- German emigrants usually left in groups from the same area of Germany. Be aware of the following information when searching your ancestor's passenger list or port record:
  - After finding your ancestor on a port record or passenger register, write down all the people on the same list
  - Check local census and other records to determine which people settled in the same area as your ancestor
  - Check for place of origin information on those who were on the same list
  - If your ancestor's surname is not unusual, but some of the others on the same list are, look those names up in the German surname books to determine where they originated

Web Sites

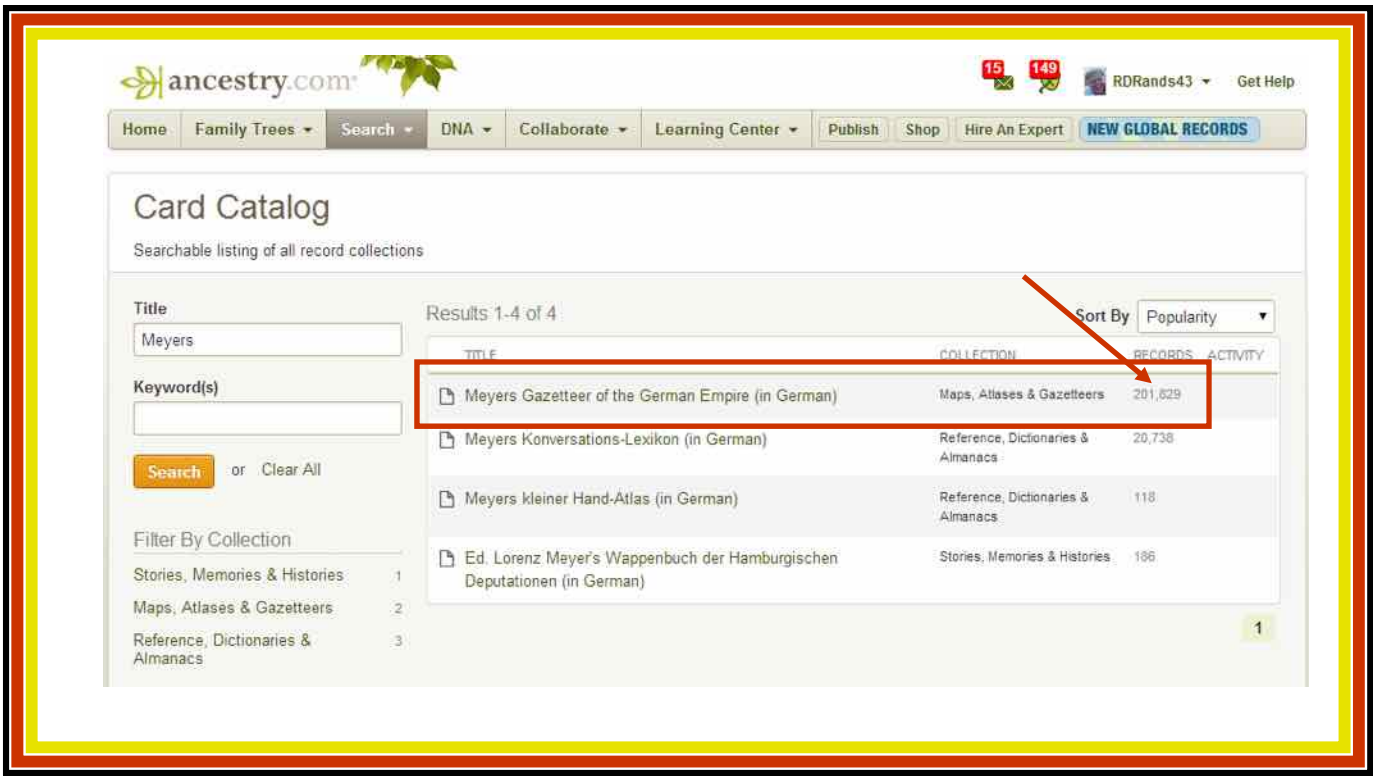
- www.germanroots.com
- www.genealogienetz.de/index_en.html
- feefhs.org (Federation of East European Family History Societies)
- www.cyndislist.com/germany.htm
- www.familysearch.org (Browse by Location)
- www.ancestry.com (Explore by Location)
- Familysearch wiki

Determine the jurisdiction that maintained the records for that location

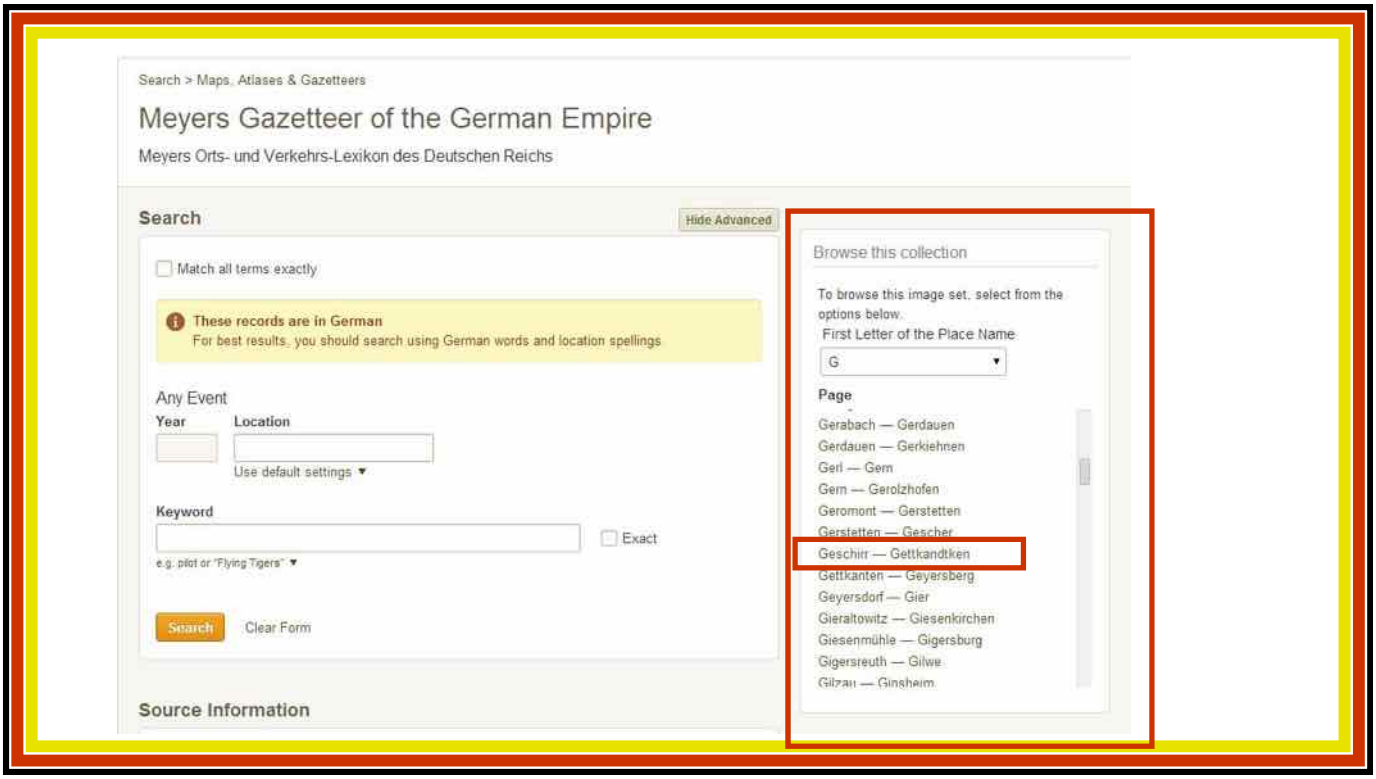
- Who ruled the territory at the time
- Does the location have a district repository
- What repositories are available for the location
- What records are available and where are they

Determine the jurisdiction that maintained the records for that location

- Internet search
- Meyers' Gazetteer of the German Empire (ancestry.com)
- FHL Catalog



All Meyers Gazetteer of the German Empire Results
Search Filters
Broad
Exact
ANY: Gesorke
COLLECTION: All Collections
Edit Search | New Search | Update
All Categories
> Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers
> Gazetteers
Meyers Gazetteer of the German Empire (in German)
This database contains Meyers Geographical and Commercial Gazetteer of the German Empire (or Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs in German). This gazetteer of the German Empire...
Learn more about this database...
Browse Individual Records ▸
Shortcut Keys ▸
View Record
Location
Settlement Type
Volume
Page
View Image
Your Search returned zero good matches
Why?
Although there may be many good matches for your ancestor in our content, we can't return good matches without more information.
What should you do?
* Add details about your ancestor – even an educated guess can increase your chances of getting a high-quality match.


Search > Maps, Atlases & Gazetteers
Meyers Gazetteer of the German Empire
Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs
Search
Hide Advanced
Match all terms exactly
These records are in German
For best results, you should search using German words and location spellings
Any Event
Year
Location
Use default settings
Keyword
Exact
e.g. pilot or "Flying Tigers"
Search
Clear Form
Source Information
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To browse this image set, select from the options below.
First Letter of the Place Name
G
Page
Gerabach — Gerdauen
Gerdauen — Gerkiehnen
Gerl — Gern
Gern — Gerolzhofen
Geromont — Gerstetten
Gerstetten — Gescher
Geschirr — Gettkandtken
Gettkanten — Geyersberg
Geyersdorf — Gier
Gieraltowitz — Giesenkirchen
Giesenmühle — Gigersburg
Gigersreuth — Gilwe
Gilzau — Ginsheim

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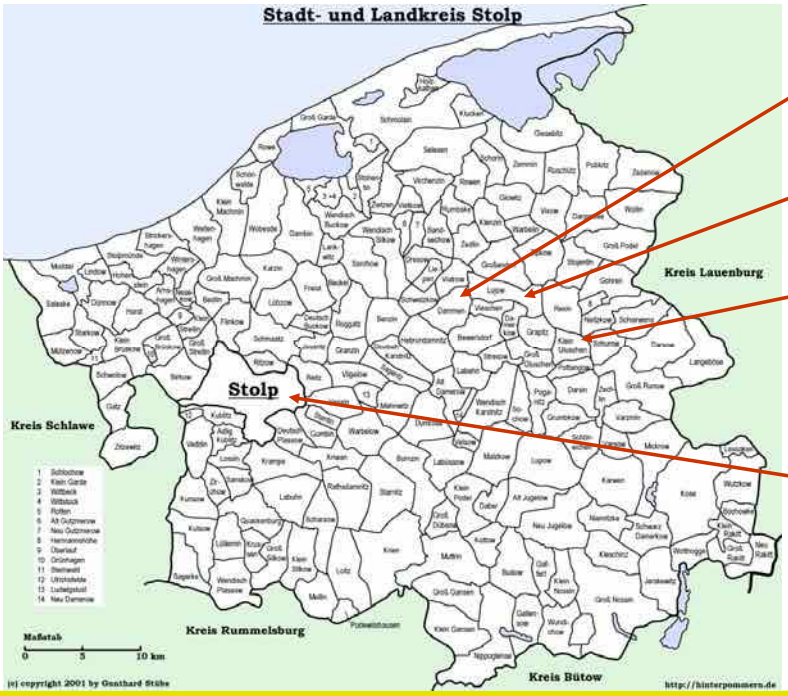
Gesorke, Rg., Pr., Pomm., RB. Köslin, LKr. UG. BKdo. Stolp, StdA. U. Klein Gluschen, P Dammen Kr. Stolp, E 6,5 km Stresow; 89 E.

Gesorke, Rg. (knight's estate), Br. (?), Bomm. (?), RB. (government district) Koslin, LKr. (Land district) UG. (?) BKdo. (military district HQ) Stolp, StdU (birth registry office) U. (under) Klein Gluschen, P (Post office with telegraph service) Dammen district Stolp, E (Rail station with passenger and freight service) 6.5 kilometers Stresow; 89 E. (inhabitants)



Dammen

Lojow

Klein Gluschen

Stolp

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Stolp, 1) Pommern, StKr. u. KrSt. (26 bz. 19 m), 3912 ha, a/d Stolpe; Pr., RB. Köslin, OLG. Stettin; 33762 E. (31728 Ev., 1100 Kath., 586 J.; 729 Mil.). — Verkehrsanst.: P, T (S. Pomm.-Staatsbhf.): (Stettin-) Belgard-Danzig, Neustettin-Zollbrück-S., S.-Stolpmünde, Klbn. (Stolpethalbahn) S.-Budow (mit EPs S.-Schlachthof); E (S. Pomm.-Kreisbhf.): Klbn. (S'er Kreisbahnen) S.-Wendisch Silkow (-Zezenow)-Schmolsin; elttr. Strbn., Hf. in Stolpmünde*. — Behörden: LrA., AG., LG., SchwG., BKdo., StdA., HptZA., KrK., KatA., EichA., Meliorat.-, KrBauA., SpezialKomm., MedizinalA., KrSchulinsp., 2 Superint., Gew.-, KaufmG., Handw.-, HdlKam., OFörst., EisBetr.-, EisMasch.-, EisVerkA., EisReparaturwst., 2 Bnmeist., Kreisbahn-, Stolpethalbahn-

StKr. (city that is its own government)

Stolp, Pomerania

Edit This Page

Stolp is the German name for a city in Poland, and was historically an administrative district (Kreis) in Pommern. The Polish name for the city and area is Słupsk. Other older names referencing this area include: Ztulp , Sloop , Slupz , Ztulpz , Schlupitzk and Schlupz.

FROM WIKIPEDIA FOR SLUPSK, POLAND

Monuments [edit]

- Słupsk Town Hall (Plac Zwycięstwa 3)
- A new Town Hall (Zwycięstwa Square 1)
- County Office (Szarych Szeregów 14)
- Pomeranian Dukes Castle (Dominikańska 5 - 9)
- Municipal Public Library (Grodzka Street 3)
- The Castle Mill (ul. Dominikańska 5 - 9)
- Post-Dominican church of St. Jack (ul. Dominikańska 5-9)
- Church of Virgin Mary (ul. Nowobramska)
- The Church of the Holiest Heart of Jesus (Armii Krajowej Street 22)
- The Church of the Holy Cross (Słowackiego Street 42)
- Monastery Church under the invocation of St. Otto (Henryka Pobożnego Street 7)
- New Gate (Plac Zwyciestwa Street 12)
- The Mill Gate (Dominikańska Street 5-9)
- Richter's granary (Dominikanska Street 5-9)
- On the hill next to dr Maxa Josepha Street there is a Former funeral home of Jewish Commune (synagogue) (dr Max Joseph Street)
- Old Brewery in Słupsk (Kilińskiego Street 26-28)
- Defensive walls
- Department store called 'Słowiniec' with the oldest wooden lift in Europe (Zwycięstwa Square 11)
- Witches' Tower (F. Nullo Street 13)
- Main Post Office (Łukasiewicza Street 3)

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2.3.8 Vital Records
3 Searching in German sources
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3.2 Books
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Locating place of origin
Germany is made up of different kingdoms, duchies, and Prussian provinces. Within these areas, emigration records were usually kept on a county seat or district level of government. To find your ancestor's emigration record you must first know the town he was from. Then consult the Meyers gazetteer to determine the county seat or district the town was in. If you already know the town information then go directly to Meyers gazetteer.
In order to research your family in Germany, it is essential that you have identified the place where they came from. It is not enough to know only 'Germany' or 'Prussia,' as these were quite large
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