

German Research

Understanding Culture, Places and Time Frames

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Discover the heritage of your German ancestors, what propelled them to come to America and how to find them in the old country. Key pieces of US research that lead back to the home country. Available research tools: online, printed, filmed and digitized materials. Case studies that may provide insight into the research you have been reluctant to pursue.

Germany is made up of sixteen Länder (singular Land, colloquially but rarely in a legal context, also called Bundesland, for "federated state"), which are partly sovereign constituent states of the Federal Republic of Germany. (Wikipedia)

State	Capital	Area (km ²)	Population
Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart	35,752	10,717,000
Bavaria	Munich	70,549	12,444,000
Berlin	Berlin	892	3,400,000
Brandenburg	Potsdam	29,477	2,568,000
Bremen	Bremen	404	663,000
Hamburg	Hamburg	755	1,735,000
Hesse	Wiesbaden	21,115	6,098,000
Lower Saxony	Hanover	47,618	8,001,000
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Schwerin	23,174	1,720,000
North Rhine-Westphalia	Düsseldorf	34,043	18,075,000
Rhineland-Palatinate	Mainz	19,847	4,061,000
Saarland	Saarbrücken	2,569	1,056,000
Saxony	Dresden	18,416	4,296,000
Saxony-Anhalt	Magdeburg	20,445	2,494,000
Schleswig-Holstein	Kiel	15,763	2,829,000
Thuringia	Erfurt	16,172	2,355,000

German Online Research Guidance

German Genealogy, FamilySearch Wiki:

https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Germany_Genealogy

German Genealogy and German Emigration Records - Duane Bogenschneider

http://www.genealoger.com/german/ger_emigration_records.htm

Free Databases: Germany – <http://www.freesurname.com/search/germany.html>

Pennsylvania Germans Gravestones

“*Stones of Faith—Pennsylvania Germans & Their Gravestones*” website in the Internet Archive Wayback Machine. *Stones of Faith* is no longer an active website, but the Wayback Machine

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captured the site, so it would not be lost forever. Using the Wayback Machine is a great way to be able to view sites that have disappeared. 684 billion webpages have been saved over time: <https://web.archive.org/> The Home page of *Stones of Faith* is at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20130731201930/http://www.pagstones.com/index.html>

Kevan Hansen's : "Map Guide to German Parish Registers"

<https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/lessons/hansens-map-guides-finding-records-with-parish-maps>

Name of Town	District (Kreis)	Province	Evangelical (Evangelisch)	Catholic (Katholisch)
Arnbruck	Viechtach	Niederbayern	Zwiesel	Arnbruck
Regensburg	Regensburg	Oberpfalz	Regensburg	Regensburg

German Research Information – Mark Rabideau: <https://www.many-roads.com/>

The German Genealogist – Karl Michael Sala

<http://www.germangenealogist.com/> **-link doesn't work**

FamilySearch - <https://www.familysearch.org/en/>

Browse Records or the Catalog by Location: Europe – Germany

[Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) – Numerous Immigration and German Record databases

Research Sources in Germany

Gazetteers & Maps: Meyers Orts- und Verkehrslexikon: <https://www.meyersgaz.org/>

Church Records: Lutheran and Catholic (Kirchenbucher)

Catholic Church mandate in 1563 to record marriage and christening records. Protestant churches also began to record vital records. Loss of records or change of where they are kept due to changes in boundary and jurisdictional changes.

- Family Registers: often associated with a church parish (Familienregister)
- Baptismal Registers (Taufregister) or Birth Register (Geburtsregister)
- Confirmation Registers (Konfirmationregister)
- Marriage Registers (Traugister)
- Death Registers (Sterberegister)
- Burial Registers (Grabenregister)
- Census Records: very few (Volkzählungen)
- Vital Records: civil registration required after 1876
- Emigration Sources: Various German Archives
- Occupational Sources: apprenticeship or guild lists
- Court Records: similar to US
- Land Records: Deeds
- Military Records
- Family Books (Ortsippenbuch)

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- Tax lists, newspapers, city chronicles, school records, address books, German lineage books, published funeral sermons.

(Reference: Notes from Finding Your German Ancestors by Kevan M. Hansen)

The German family of Louise Clara Nepple Anderson

Her obituary and a news article are from the family collection

She died 21 September 1932.

Funeral held at St. Lodgers Catholic Church Creighton, Nebraska.

She was born in 18 May 1886 in Roselle, Carroll County, Iowa.

Her father Frank Nepple died in 1918, her mother Mary Schaffer in 1889.

Pedigree Charts and Descendants Lists

Family information taken from research records and Nepple Family Book

Siblings	US Census Records 1880-1930				
	1880	1900	1910	1920	1930
John	Bavaria	Germany US 1874 NA	Germany US 1874 NA		
Catherine	Bavaria	Germany US 1875	Germany	Bavaria US 1875 NA 1877	
Joseph In California	Bavaria	Bavaria US 1877 NA	Iowa	Bavaria US 1877 NA 1882	
Jacob	Baiern	Germany US 1876 NA			
Franz	Bavaria	Germany US 1875 NA	Germany		
Marie			Germany US 1900	Germany	
Andrew	Bavaria	Germany US 1875 NA	Germany US 1875 PA	Germany US 1875 NA	Germany 1882 same
Alois	Baden	(Catholic Clergy)			

Naturalization Record-First Papers- State of Iowa, July 8th, 1875, Frank Nepple a native of Germany, he signed as Franz Neppl, Subscribed and sworn by Irene B. Grass on 8th of July 1875. Wm. Marsh Jr. Clerk of the District Court. FHL Film #1480848.

Marriage Certificate 19 Apr. 1877, State of Iowa, Carroll County on the testimony of Joseph Nepple, for Frank Nepple and Mary Schaffer. FHL Film # 1035017

Funeral Card –Listing place of birth in Germany. Provided by new family acquaintance.

New York Passenger Lists 1820-1957, Indexes and Ship Passenger Lists

All the records found they left from Bremen, but no place of origin is recorded.

- Franz Neppl (Mopel)19, 1 March 1875 with sister Catherine 30, brothers Jacob 27 and Andreas 18, and future sister in law Walburga Geiger 24.
249 Passengers, 227 in Steerage, 22 in Cabins, Ship Mosel

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- Alois Neppel 14, 28 May 1876. Possibly traveling with person listed above him.
740 Passengers, 637 in Steerage, 103 in Cabins, Ship Oder
- Joseph Neppel 28, with wife Anne 21, March 24, 1877
287 Passengers, 259 in Steerage, 28 in Cabins, Ship Oderl

Carroll County, Iowa Genweb

Biographies

Der Carroll Demokrat, a German-language Newspaper Published between about 1874 and 1920

Andreas Neppel born on 26 October 1856 in Arnbruck, Bavaria, Germany.

He learned the trade of miller and assisted in the business of his father, who was a successful miller.

In 1875, he immigrated to the United States of North America and settled in Roselle Township, Carroll County, Iowa

Notes: The German town of Arnbruck is in Bavaria, about 40 or 50 miles east of Regensburg, near the border of the Czech Republic.

News Article

German Families Arrive in Carroll, 1882

MEIS, NEPPL, KECKEVOET, BRUENING, WIDEMEYER

Mr. Jakob Neppel has brought 24 families from...Bavaria.

The families came from the Bavarian Forest in the vicinity of Regen, Zwiefel, Deggendorf, etc.,

Carroll Documents maintained by Ralph Leonard

<http://iagenweb.org/boards/carroll/documents/index.cgi?read=157416>

Bavaria, Germany Information – <https://bavaria-info.de/>

Bavaria is divided into 7 administrative districts called Regierungsbezirke (singular Regierungsbezirk).

- Upper Franconia (German: Oberfranken)
- Middle Franconia (Mittelfranken)
- Lower Franconia (Unterfranken)
- Swabia (Schwaben)
- Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz)
- Upper Bavaria (Oberbayern)
- Lower Bavaria (Niederbayern)

These administrative regions consist of 71 administrative districts (called Landkreise, singular Landkreis) and 25 independent cities (kreisfreie Städte, singular kreisfreie Stadt)

Gemeinden (municipalities)

The 71 administrative districts are on the lowest level divided into 2031 municipalities (called Gemeinden, singular Gemeinde). Together with the 25 independent cities (which are in effect

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municipalities independent of Landkreis administrations), there are a total of 2056 municipalities in Bavaria.

Culture

Though only a relatively small part belongs to the Alps, the perception of Bavaria as an alpine region endures. Some features of the Bavarian culture and mentality are remarkably distinct from the rest of Germany. Noteworthy differences (especially in rural areas, less significant in the major cities) can be found with respect to:

Religion - While 56.4% of the population adhere to the Catholic Church, 21% are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria.

Traditions - Bavarians commonly emphasize pride in their traditions. Traditional costumes known as Tracht are worn on special occasions and include in Altbayern Lederhosen for males and Dirndl for females. Centuries-old folk music is performed.

The Maibaum, or Maypole (which in the Middle Ages served as the community's yellow pages, as figurettes on the pole represent the trades of the village), and the bagpipes in the Upper Palatinate region bear witness to the ancient Celtic and Germanic remnants of cultural heritage of the region. Whether actually in Bavaria, overseas or full of citizens from other nations they continue to cultivate their traditions.

Food and Drink -Bavarians tend to place a great value on food and drink.

In addition to their renowned dishes, Bavarians also consume many items of food and drink which are unusual elsewhere in Germany; for example, Weisswurst ("white sausage") or in some instances a great variety of nifty entrails. At folk festivals and in many beer gardens, beer is traditionally served by the litre (the so-called Maß).

Language and Dialects - Three German dialects are spoken in Bavaria:

Austro-Bavarian in Old Bavaria (South-East and East),

Swabian German (Alemannic German dialect) in Bavarian part of Swabia (South West)

East Franconian German in Franconia (North).

Regensburg is located at the confluence of the Danube and Regen rivers, at the northernmost bend in the Danube. To the east lies the Bavarian Forest. Regensburg is the capital of the Bavarian administrative region Upper Palatinate. The large medieval centre of the city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Wikipedia

German Genealogy Reference Books

Atlantic Bridge to Germany

New editions of the popular series, The Atlantic Bridge to Germany, authored by Charles Hall, are being published. Alsace-Lorraine was first, Baden is the second volume and Pomerania is now available.

Books in the new Atlantic Bridge to Germany begin with a brief history of the region, as well as information on geography, books of interest, and more. Many large and small place names are listed in these volumes together with maps dating from the late 1800s.

Names of counties (Kreise) and government districts (Bezirke) are given, as well as what church records are available at the Family History Library.

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Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research

Written by Clifford Neal Smith, 1976, The Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research is often regarded as the best book for surveying "the material available to the genealogist seeking to link American lineages with their origins in German-speaking Europe." The emphasis of the work is on German genealogical research in America, with special focus on immigration records, German ethnic religious bodies in America, and manuscript and published source materials, both in America and Germany, by Clifford Neal Smith; Anna Piszczan-Czaja Smith. Was on familysearch.org and Ancestry.com, for sale at Abe Books

Finding Your German Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide

Written by Kevan M. Hansen, Finding Your German Ancestors: A Beginner's Guide provides a valuable introduction for researchers who have not previously worked with German records, highlighting excellent sources for researchers who may have "cold feet" about researching in Germany or with German records. For sale on Abe books.

In Search of Your German Roots: A Complete Guide to Tracing Your Ancestors in the Germanic Areas of Europe, by Angus Baxter, is designed to help genealogists trace their German ancestry not only in Germany but in all the German-speaking areas of Europe. For sale at Abe books.

Deciphering Handwriting in German Documents

Analyzing German, Latin, and French in Vital Records Written in Germany, by Roger P. Minert, GRT Publications, 2001. This book contains many photos showing different styles of handwriting.

German-American Names, Written by George F. Jones.

Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns

Written by Edward R. Brandt, et al.

German Immigration into Pennsylvania Through the Port of Philadelphia from 1700 to 1775, and the Redemptioners by Frank R. Diffenderffer.

The German Research Companion, by Shirley J. Riemer. Sacramento: Lorelei Press, 2000.

Encyclopedic coverage of a wide range of topics of interest to German researchers: historical German territories, emigration and immigration, vocabulary, German records, German archives, and other resources.

Germany: a history, by John E. Rodes, Occidental College, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

If I Can You Can Decipher Germanic Records, by Edna M. Bentz.

How to decipher old German script, with many examples.

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