

Hints & Tips for German Research

Genealogical Forum of Oregon, German Interest Group - 4 February 2023

Ask fellow researchers for their thoughts and suggestions.

Considerations if you suspect you know the exact village where your ancestor was born.

Time & Place are critical to success. Misspelling of place names in records is very common. If your ancestor was born before 1871, they weren't born in Germany. Between 1815 and 1871 they may have been born in one of the 39 predominantly German speaking sovereign states in Central Europe.

The spelling in the native language may not be the same as what we use in the U.S. In Germany for example, Köln = Cologne, München = Munich and in Austria Wien = Vienna.

Meyers Gazeetter is helpful to determine the correct spelling - <https://www.meyersgaz.org/>
It lists the various political jurisdictions where you will want search for records. It can also be very helpful when viewing a marriage record where the name of the groom's village is not discernible.

Caution - Don't be misled by records listing large towns or cities.

Considerations when you *don't know* the village where your ancestor was born.

This offers us a unique opportunity to advance our research skills. Review the Kory L. Meyerink chart that I have provided. Select the proper arrival date column. Check all of the appropriate resources he lists. You may discover the appropriate village name in one of them. Consider who the sponsors and witnesses were. They are often related or close friends.

My favorite Germany Surname Distribution Map is - <http://legacy.stoepel.net/en/>

Use it determine the locations where two or more surnames are prevalent.

The FamilySearch Wiki has 46 links to Online Surname Distribution Maps.

https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Surname_Distribution_Maps

In the U.S. some town names are used repeatedly across the country. We generally know which one is being referred to if the name of the state is associated with it. Examples are Washington 88, Springfield 41, Franklin 35, Greenville 30. The same is true In Germany except it can be more of a challenge. Bruck 32, Rosenberg 35, Kirchberg 44, Bühl 48, Bruch 60, Holzhausen 75, Grünhof 81, Weinberg 96, Moos 100, Neuhof 308, Neumühle 347. **Use Meyers Gazetteer.**

Become comfortable with the writing in German records.

<http://www.deutsche-handschrift.de/adsschreiben.php#schriftfeld>

If you would like to locate & contact relatives, you can use the following.

Determine the correct postal code at Wikipedia.de – <https://www.wikipedia.de/>

Use a Telephone Directory such as <https://www.datelefonbuch.de/> Record the addresses.

Visit the village website using the correct village name + Country Code. ie search for Ettenheim.de

You may wish to take a look at "*Germany Finding Town of Origin*".

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

OTHER RESOURCES

Church Records

Protestant \$\$ - <https://www.archion.de/>

Catholic - <https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/>

Cyndi's List Germany / Deutschland - <https://www.cyndislist.com/germany>

Cyndi's list includes links to other German speaking countries.

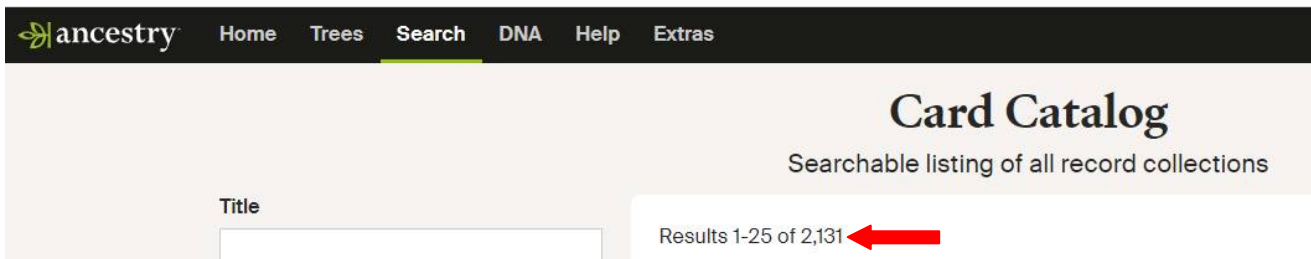
Genealogy.net - http://www.genealogienetz.de/index_en.html

Keyword search results for Germany in the catalogs at FamilySearch.org & Ancestry.com

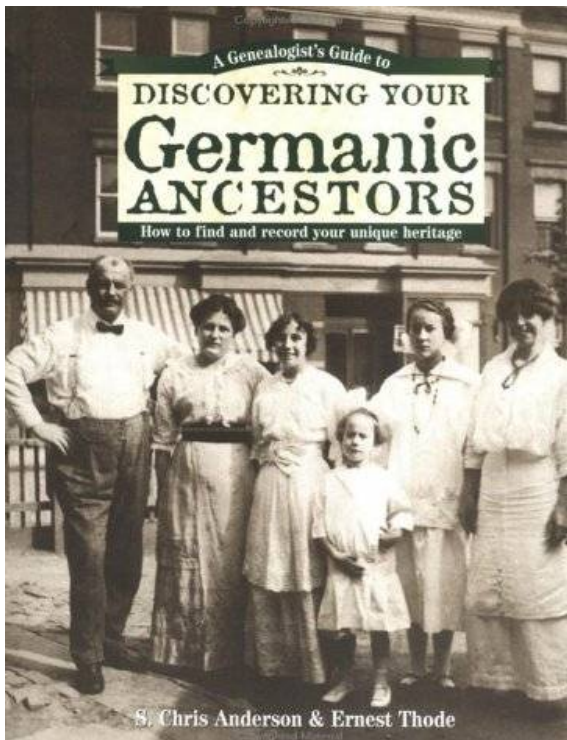
Search Results for FamilySearch Catalog

 PRINT  Catalog Print List (0)

1-20 of 162,709 results 



The screenshot shows the Ancestry.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Ancestry logo and links for Home, Trees, Search, DNA, Help, and Extras. Below the navigation bar, the page title is "Card Catalog" with the subtitle "Searchable listing of all record collections". A search box is visible with the word "Title" above it. To the right of the search box, it displays "Results 1-25 of 2,131" with a red arrow pointing left.



GFO or at AbeBooks
<https://tinyurl.com/y3ch4nkd>



Lands of the German Empire and Before
<https://tinyurl.com/bdhsurj6>

Best American Sources for Learning the Town of Origin

This chart suggests the record types most likely to identify an immigrants town of origin in his or her native country. It is only a guide and in any specific case, any of these or other sources may provide the town name.

Codes: A = Excellent B = Good C = Possible

<i>Date of Arrival---></i> -----	<i>Before 1820</i>	<i>1820s- 1860s</i>	<i>1860s- 1890s</i>	<i>1890s- present</i>
Record Type:				
Family and Home		C	B	A
Manuscript Collections	C		C	B
Biography	C	B	A	
Business				C
Cemeteries			C	C
Census			C	C
Church Records	A	A	A	A
Court Records	B			
Arrival Lists	C	C	B	A
Passports		C	A	A
Border Crossings		C	B	A
Genealogies	A	B	B	A
History	C	C	B	
Land and Property	C			
Naturalization		C	B	A
Newspapers		B	C	
Obituaries		C	A	A
Pensions			C	A
Periodicals	A	B	C	C
Probate Records	C			
Societies	B	C	C	C
Vital Records			C	A
Voting Registers				C