

German Dialects and What They Mean for the Researcher

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German dialects are typically described in relation to the High German, or Second, Consonant Shift (HGCS), which started in the southern area of the German-speaking region about 1500 years ago. German dialects have been studied intensively for a century and a half and many works have been written on this topic. Some easily accessible titles are listed in the bibliography below. The following table illustrates the basics of the HGCS:

Sound	English	Low German	High German
p>pf, ff	piper	Piper	Pfeiffer
t>z	tide	Tiid	Zeit
t>ss	great	groot	gross
d>t	dike	Diek	Teich
k>ch	book	Book	Buch
k>kh	---	Kind	Khind

Prefixes, suffixes and other regional clues also come into play. See Baker, Theola Walden in the bibliography.

For further reading:

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<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~mstone/dialectical.html>

This article was adapted from Smith, Clifford Neal & Anna Piszczan-Czaja Smith.

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Wikipedia. "German Dialects."

For maps of surname distributions, based on a modern phonebook, see this site:

<http://www.verwandtd.de/karten/>

Variant spellings are not considered as one name. Müller and Mueller are considered separately.

Online help from your own home!

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community.familysearch.org

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