

Der Kurier

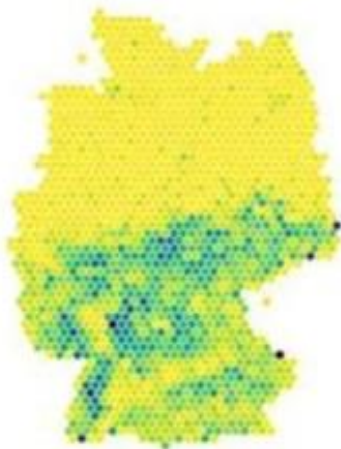
VOLUME 38, NUMBER 3 / SEPTEMBER 2020



When the stars align:

Immigrant Connections columnist Bob Greiner discusses a recent case of “genealogical serendipity” he experienced in his research

when two people who had been researching the same historical person had their paths cross by a stroke of luck. **Page 86.**



Beginnings and endings: Have you ever come across village and town names in Germany that seem to have the same prefixes and suffixes? *Our Language Leaves* columnist Ken Weaver will tell you all about them, complete with stunning visuals showing their distribution across Germany. **Page 100.**

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**MID-ATLANTIC GERMANIC SOCIETY**

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New Windsor, MD 21776

<http://www.magsgen.com>

Our mission: To stimulate and facilitate research on Germanic genealogy and heritage in the mid-Atlantic region

The Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society (MAGS) is a non-profit genealogical society founded in July 1982. Annual dues are only \$15 (individual) or \$20 (family). Add \$5 if you desire a printed copy of **Der Kurier** each quarter. Membership is open to all interested persons without regard to place of residence, nationality, or ethnicity. A membership application appears on the back cover and on our website. Benefits include:

Spring & Fall Conferences and Workshops

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Submissions to Der Kurier: Articles concerning Germanic genealogy and heritage in the Mid-Atlantic region are welcome, as are "Letters to the Editor." Research articles should document conclusions with appropriate citation of primary sources. MAGS reserves the right to edit submissions for length and style. Unless previous arrangements are made with the editor, material published becomes the property of MAGS. Deadline for submissions: the first of January, April, July and October. Submit to Sean Kessler, *Der Kurier* Editor, MAGS, 400 S Manoa Rd, Havertown, PA 19083. E-mail: newsletter@magsgen.com

VOM PRÄSIDENT

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Onward into Fall!

On behalf of the MAGS Board, I extend greetings and a sincere hope that you, your friends, and your family are continuing to cope with the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. Once again, our editor Sean Kessler has put together a great issue. It contains many visuals for you to enjoy and hopefully will give you ideas on how to illustrate your own family's history.

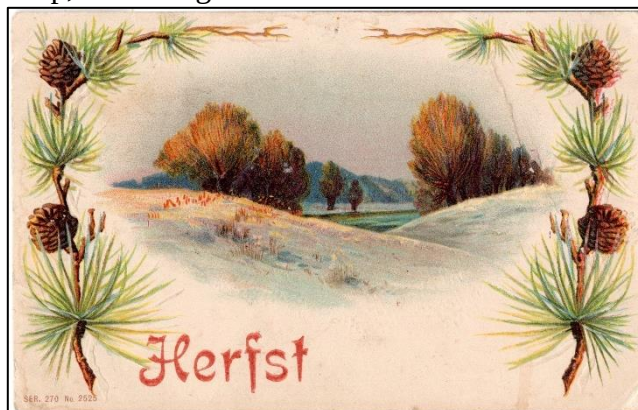
I'm delighted to report that our fall conference is a go. The ongoing health crisis and a desire to increase attendance determined how we will hold the conference. Rather than meeting in person for an entire day, the Board decided to hold a virtual fall conference; it will run through a web-conferencing platform using a high-speed internet connection. The event will take place on two days: Saturday, 17 October, and Sunday, 18 October; both sessions will run from 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. EDT. Judy G. Russell will present two lectures each day. The Board took this approach to safeguard your health and to offer people who cannot conveniently travel to central Maryland for a conference the opportunity to attend. The program committee will be providing additional details; be sure to check the MAGS website for updates as well.

I have great news to report about the activity of our new MAGS volunteers. Many of you know MAGS has a Facebook page, and many of you know MAGS has not managed that site well. Since Facebook and other social media have become more prevalent in the genealogy community, the MAGS Board requested help from our members to support a presence on Facebook. MAGS Board members Carol Carman, John Frank, Roy Shiflet, and Bob Greiner report that the response was fantastic. They informed us that MAGS members David Hunsicker, Albert Spengler, Steve Ullrich, Annette Adams, Martha Schmidt, and Marty McIntyre stepped up to help us. To support MAGS on Facebook, the MAGS Facebook team has been posting items of potential interest to our members with the additional goal of attracting new members to join MAGS. If you have not looked at the MAGS Facebook page yet, you can access it at <https://www.facebook.com/Mid-Atlantic-Germanic-Society-182626951765986>. Please join me in thanking our volunteers.

Finally, I chose two postcards from my collection appropriate for this time of year, *Herbst* (autumn). Both are simple images and display how varied autumn can be. It can be colorful and crisp, or it can give us snow. *Willkommen in den Herbst*.



Kenneth W. Heger

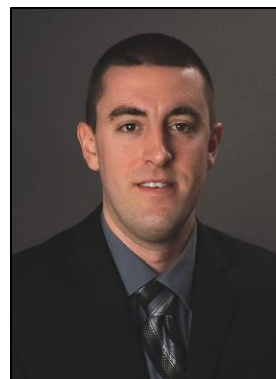


VOM HERAUSGEBER

FROM THE EDITOR

Mistakes: The Best Way to Learn

It was June 2020; I had recently finished the previous issue of *Der Kurier* and proudly sent it off for publication and distribution. I was going through my personal email after work and unexpectedly came across a message from our regular *Unsere Sprachblätter* columnist Ken Weaver. He was inquiring as to how the article he had written, which was very obviously titled “*Stand und Gewerbe: Status and Occupation*” in the draft he sent me, was titled “What’s in a German Name?” in the issue, especially since the content of the article had nothing to do with names. I quickly realized I had made the oversight because in all of the issues which I’ve edited in some capacity, the column had maintained the same title, and I had made the assumption that it would remain so in perpetuity. My heart sank as I frantically contacted our President and Editor Emeritus on the best path forward. We’ve since corrected and updated the June issue on the MAGS website. The error in the mistitling of Ken’s column was mine, and I regret that it was not identified before the print version was published and distributed. Sorry Ken.



Sean M. Kessler

Flash back to April 2020; I had just completed a genealogy research session for one of my clients, one that I felt was very successful as I had presumably found one of his ancestors’ village of origin in Germany. I excitedly summarized the research in a lengthy email explaining the circumstances and logic behind the discovery, which, reading over it again, was pretty solid. The next night, I received an email from him that could be summarized as, “Cool story, but there’s this one part about this that seems pretty obvious to me that doesn’t add up.” Taking the input from my client, I set about attempting to prove myself wrong by using a different record group and quickly did so. This was something I should have done on my own before sending the research off to my client, a mistake I won’t make again.

As I mentioned in my first editor’s column, I am in the process of slowly learning German. In the software I use, when one is drilling and reviewing, the learner is often expected to fill in the missing German word in a sentence. If he doesn’t feel extremely confident about his answer or, in many cases, just has no clue what the answer is, he can hover over the missing word and hear it spoken. For obvious reasons, this often leads me to the correct answer. However, there have been quite a few times where I have felt so sure that I knew the right answer that I bypassed the handicap of hearing the word spoken and confidently typed in the wrong German word. It is in those times, going from a confident high to a disappointing low in the span of a second, that I feel I learn the most about the language. I’ve noticed that it is those words that become cemented in my vocabulary, and the next time they come up, I distinctly remember the pain of getting the wrong answer and modestly type in the correct one.

I believe it is exactly for this reason that I remember a time in my high school Physics class. I had spent the morning convincing myself that gravity happened because of centripetal force, obviously not consulting the textbook we had been given. When the teacher brought up gravity and asked the class why it happened, I confidently raised my hand and gave my answer, and while our instructor was very gracious in saying that it was an interesting thought, he moved on to another learner who talked about Isaac Newton's theories. Indeed, we were being taught Classical Physics, and perhaps it was this wrong answer that led me to eventually teach myself about Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

Why is it that getting something wrong when we were confident about our answer is so beneficial to learning? "The answer isn't completely clear but it likely involves the fact that making an error rallies your attention—and even more so if you're surprised that you got it wrong. In addition, it is easier to learn something new after you've summoned up your prior knowledge—a process neuroscientists call memory reconsolidation."¹ The footnoted and



linked article, written by Claudia Wallis of the Hechinger Report, a journalism organization covering innovation and inequality in education, also describes how "people with a fixed mindset...tend to see errors as signs that they are not good at something. Those with a growth mindset see them as signs they need to work harder." While it would be difficult to create the conditions necessary for a learner to be confident in the wrong answer, we can approach learning specifically but also life in general with a growth mindset, where mistakes are seen as an opportunity to learn more as opposed to convincing us that whatever we're doing at the moment just isn't something at which we're able to become proficient.

However much of an effective learning tool they can be, mistakes can have consequences. In the case of learning a language or about physics, although getting the wrong answer is certainly not a pleasurable experience, the positive effects on continuing to learn the topic are gained without any negative externalities. But in the case of the mistake in research for my client and the mistitling of Ken's column last issue, they can also have negative effects for other people. I was relieved that my client had found my mistake in research so quickly, not simply taking me at my word and spending many hours researching the wrong person in Germany. I feel the best thing we can do when we make mistakes is to quickly admit them (i.e., don't get defensive) and find a way to make it up to the person who was negatively affected by the oversight. I hope that this ode to the benefits of mistakes will keep Ken coming back to *Der Kurier* as the excellent regular columnist he is; I know I'll be using the error to continue to grow as an editor.

I welcome and encourage all of you to reach out to me with ideas and suggestions (email me at newsletter@magsgen.com). *Bis zum nächsten Mal!*

¹ Wallis, Claudia. "Why Mistakes Matter in Creating A Path For Learning." KQED, July 26, 2017. <https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/48770/how-making-mistakes-primers-kids-to-learn-better>.

AUSWANDERER ZUSAMMEN

IMMIGRANT CONNECTIONS

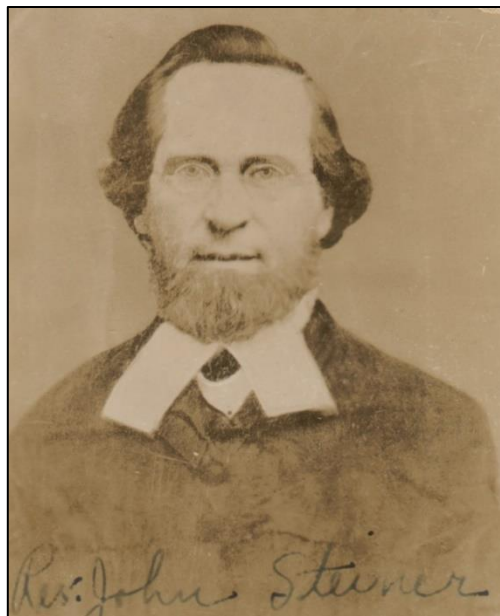
A Case of Genealogical Serendipity

Once in a while in the universe of our genealogical research the stars align and we experience a shining moment of success. The occasion is even more exciting when it happens unexpectedly. Such was the case recently for several MAGS members and one happy family researcher.



Bob Greiner

In the December 2019 issue of *Der Kurier*, Ken Heger described the extant records available from the United States consulate in Nuremberg (Nürnberg), Germany.¹ He also published a guide to those records on the MAGS website.² The guide contains a list of United States citizens who died within the jurisdiction of the Nuremberg consulate. The consul notified the State Department of each death via official despatch.



John M. Steiner
(photo courtesy of Vicki Markham)

With an eye toward writing my regular column on finding records about German immigrants, I conducted some preliminary research to determine which person from the list of deaths would yield sufficient sources of information. I chose the Reverend John Melchior Steiner, who died in Nuremberg in 1884 at the residence of a nephew. Why was Steiner in Nuremberg and what could we learn about him? I began to write an article explaining the value of using the consulate records as an initial source.

Before I finished the article, I sat down to read a recent issue of *German Life* magazine. I turned to MAGS editor emeritus Jim Beidler's Family Research column, which was about a friend of his, Susan Wilson, who had researched an immigrant ancestor for years.³ She hit a brick wall trying to determine whether her ancestor had married in Germany or the United States. My jaw dropped when I finally read the name of her ancestor. It was John Melchior Steiner! I immediately contacted Jim, who put me in touch

¹ Heger, Kenneth W., Ph.D., "Researching Bavaria, Part V: The American Consulate in Nuremberg, 1833 -1912," *Der Kurier* (December 2019), p. 147.

² Heger, Kenneth W., "Guide to using the records of the American Consulate in Nürnberg, Germany, 1846 – 1912," <https://magsgen.com/upload/Consulates - Fact Sheets/Consolidated Nürnberg Guide 1576335538.pdf>

³ Beidler, James M., "Genealogy's 'Evidence Revolution' Can Still Leave Case Unsolved," *German Life* (April/May 2020), p. 64.

with his friend. We compared notes and I was able to give her information from a source that confirmed her suspicion about the marriage. I began to search for more information on Steiner. Several family trees on Ancestry gave a few details about his life.⁴

John (Johann) Melchior Steiner was born on 20 August 1818 in Langenzenn, district of Fürth, Bavaria. He was one of six children of Georg Conrad Steiner and Catharina Regina Jacobina Sedelmeyer. His father died before John turned eight years old.

In 1840, Steiner joined the Basel Mission, an organization that trained young men and women to be missionaries to undeveloped countries. Their primary areas of concern were Africa, India, and China, but they also sent some people to the United States, where many German immigrants had settled in the emerging Midwest. Steiner graduated in 1846 and was sent to the United States. He arrived in New York City from Le Havre, France, on 6 October 1846 with two other missionaries from Basel. Steiner immediately settled in Canal Dover (now Dover), in Tuscarawas County, Ohio, where he became the pastor of St. John's Church.

In 1847 Steiner married Christiana Friederika Gräter, presumably in Ohio, although no record of their marriage has been found. Steiner's descendants were never sure if the couple married in Germany or Ohio. Christiana was born in Württemberg, but it was unclear when she arrived in the United States.



Christiana (Nanette) Steiner
(photo courtesy of Vicki Markham)



Johann Melchior Steiner baptism, Langenzenn, Bavaria
(Archion.de)

John and Christiana Steiner had several children, but only two daughters survived to adulthood. The marriages of both daughters produced descendants. Steiner served as the pastor of several churches in Ohio between 1848 and 1865. In 1867 he was in Newark, New Jersey, followed by several parishes in New York. Christiana Steiner died in February 1884 and was buried in Dutchess County, New York. After revising his will in June of that year, John left for Germany to visit relatives and to rejuvenate his health. Unfortunately, he died there on 10 November 1884. The U.S. consul in Nuremberg reported the information to the State Department.

Let's now take a closer look at the research and sources that were used to reconstruct the details of John Steiner's life.

⁴ Ancestry.com, Haight family tree, <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/25921573/person/1743316924>

The Protestant church records of Langenzenn, Bavaria, are available on the Archion website.⁵ I was able to find quite a bit of information about John's family in those records. His father was married twice, John being a child of the second marriage. It does not appear that his mother remarried. She died sometime after John immigrated to the United States. The church records do not tell the whole story, however.

While searching for the Steiner surname, I found two articles about Conrad Steiner in the *Königlich Bayerisches Intelligenzblatt* (Royal Bavarian Intelligence Journal), a legal newspaper.⁶ The articles, from May and October 1827, announced the terms for settlement of Steiner's estate. He was a master cooper, but at the time of his death in 1826 his debts exceeded his assets. The articles describe his house and outbuildings in anticipation of an auction to be held to recover those assets to pay his creditors. It is obvious that his wife and family were left with nothing.

In 1840 Steiner entered the seminary at the Basel Mission in Switzerland. When students entered the mission, they wrote a story of their life up until that point. Students studied at the seminary for six years. They not only learned about theology, but also linguistics and practical skills that they could use in the mission field. Steiner remained at Basel until 1846.

I discovered that the Basel Mission still operates today, having merged with other organizations to form Mission21.⁷ They maintain an archive with online access to some items and a search capability. A search for Johann Melchior Steiner yielded a short description that included a portrait and his file reference number.⁸ Following an email inquiry, I learned that the archive keeps a file on each of the mission's students. Steiner's file included his *Lebensgeschichte* (life history) and about a dozen letters.

Susan Wilson decided to request a copy of the items in Steiner's file. What a prize! Steiner's life story, written at the time he entered the mission and taken from a diary he began in 1832, was 136 pages in length. The letters, written between 1840 and 1882, documented his desire to enter the mission, his first few years serving congregations in the United States, and his final years in New York. Some were reports of his activity in the mission field of the United States to the director of the Mission. In his later life he also sent small donations to the Mission. The documents were all handwritten in German Gothic script and would take quite an effort to translate in their entirety. Regardless, Susan now has a unique artifact from her ancestor's life.

Steiner's life story was revealing about his childhood. Apparently, his father was abusive to Steiner's mother and siblings. At some point after his father's death, a benefactor took John into his home. John identified him as *Herr Beck*. Research revealed him to be Johann Georg Beck, a beer brewer and innkeeper in Langenzenn. As he came of age, John began working at several different

⁵ Langenzenn, (Dekanat Fürth, Bayern), *Church Registers*, Langenzenn I, digital images, *Archion.de* (https://www.archion.de/en/browse/?no_cache=1&path=48049-429056-569656).

⁶ Rezat-Kreis, *Königlich Bayerisches Intelligenzblatt für den Rezat-Kreis* (Bavaria, Germany: Brügel, 1827), pp 1415, 1592, <https://books.google.com/books?id=lzBFAAAACAAJ>

⁷ <https://www.mission-21.org/en>

⁸ <http://www.bmarchives.org/items/show/100206984>

jobs in towns near Langenzenn. He eventually moved to Munich (*München*), where he became a waiter. At some point he became interested in the Basel Mission and wrote to the inspector (director) of the Basel Mission seeking admission.

In a book published in Germany in 2015, Judith Becker examined the history of the Basel Mission in India.⁹ She obviously obtained a copy of Steiner's life story, because she quoted from it. Discussing the troubled childhood of several missionary students, she stated that:

Steiner had to go hungry in his childhood and adolescence and was beaten by the alcoholic father, just like his mother. Nevertheless, they all [Basel students] experienced a revival, applied in Basel and were sent on a mission. (p. 203, translation by author)

In his own words:

"When I look back into the past of my life and think back to the years of my childhood, I must declare with David, Psalm 71, 5–6: 'For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O Lord, from my youth; you took me from my mother's womb; my praise is continually of you.' My mother often stood in front of my father with crying eyes, pleading for him to contribute some Kreutzer (money) for support; but with petrified hearts he threw blow after blow over his wife and his seven underage children." (p. 202, translation by author)

John Steiner's arrival in New York is documented by a ship passenger list.¹⁰ He arrived on 6 October 1846 on the ship *Cotton Planter* from Le Havre. He and two other Basel missionaries—Friederich Besel and David Gackenheimer—were among the few cabin passengers. The Basel Mission archive has files on these men as well. Friedrich Besel's descendants also requested a copy of his file, which included his life story and many letters. Besel wrote letters to the director of the

List of Cabin Passengers					
Camille Durand	30	England	N York	Lawyer	One Ticket
M ^{rs} Brun	41	France	N York		Five do
M ^{rs} F. Damier	40	"	N York		Three do
Fr. Besel	30	Germany	Prussia	Chapman	One do
J.M. Steiner	27	"	"	"	One do
Rev. David Gackenheimer	29	"	"	"	"

Passenger list of *Cotton Planter*, 6 October 1846, New York
Fr. Besel, J.M. Steiner, Joh. David Gackenheimer, Basel Missionaries (Ancestry.com)

⁹ Becker, Judith. *Conversio im Wandel: Basler Missionare zwischen Europa und Südindien und die Ausbildung einer Kontaktreligiosität, 1834–1860*, (Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), pp. 202–209, https://www.google.com/books/edition/Conversio_im_Wandel/jhz8CAAAQBAJ.

¹⁰ Ancestry.com, New York, Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820–1957 [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010), ship *Cotton Planter*, arrived 6 October 1846, <https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=7488&h=1023084638>

Basel Mission in 1846 from Le Havre and again after their arrival in New York City. Steiner and Gackenhaimer are mentioned in both. The letters describe their journey to Le Havre, the ocean transit, and their first few weeks in New York City after they arrived. A complete translation of these letters would no doubt shed more light on Steiner's journey.

I also researched Christiana Gräter's family in Germany. Her descendants had always been in doubt about whether she married John Steiner in Germany or the United States. Other sources revealed the answer.

Christiana was born on 14 November 1822 in Neckarweiningen, which is near Ludwigsburg in Württemberg. She was a daughter of Ludwig Friedrich Gräter, a merchant, and Louisa Magdalena Braun. The Protestant church records of Neckarweiningen, Württemberg, on Archion contain details of this family, including a family register page.¹¹ The records for Neckarweiningen are also on Ancestry in their **Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500–1985** collection.¹² However, Christiana's baptism record is indexed incorrectly as Christiana Friderike Gruler and the family registers are not indexed at all.¹³ The images on Archion are much clearer than those on Ancestry.

The Gräter family register presents three generations of the family—Christiana's siblings, parents, and grandparents. The entry for Christiana includes a note with an important clue. It states the following:

Wanderte 16 Febr. 1847 nach N. Amerika aus, um sich dort mit Missions Prediger Steiner zu verehelichen.

Translation: “Emigrated 16 February 1847 to North America to marry the missionary pastor Steiner there.”

It was also noted in the register that she died in 1884. It is not uncommon to find death dates recorded in German Church records for people who died in the United States.

Another important source was found in the Ancestry collection **Württemberg, Germany Emigration Index**. (Note that I only found this result by spelling her surname as Graeter – not Gräter.) This collection is an index of documents created by royal authorities in Württemberg when a person requested permission to emigrate. The index covers the years from the late eighteenth century

¹¹ Neckarweiningen, (Dekanat Ludwigsburg, Württemberg), Church Registers, digital images, *Archion.de* https://www.archion.de/en/browse/?no_cache=1&path=121390-699459-699742.

¹² Ancestry.com, *Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500–1985* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016), Neckarweiningen Familienbücher (Uneheliche), u Taufen 1808–1871, image 308 of 943, <https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1195662-00307>.

¹³ Ancestry.com, *Württemberg, Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500–1985* [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016), Neckarweiningen, Taufen, Familienbücher, Konfirmationen, Totenindex u Heiraten 1667–1908, image 503 of 1270, <https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/61023/1195660-00502>.

[Archion.de](https://www.archion.de), Württemberg: Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart, Dekanat Ludwigsburg, Neckarweiningen, Familienregister 1817–1817 Band 18, Bild 19, <http://www.archion.de/p/f72d006d2c/>

to 1900. The entries in the index point to a microfilm in the Family History Library catalog. You must then use FamilySearch to locate the digital version of the film. No page number or other reference is given, so you must search through the entire film to find the record of interest. The task is not simple, but it can be done, and the results can be very rewarding.

Christiana Gräter's file contained several legal documents.¹⁴ It can be difficult to translate documents that were handwritten in the Gothic script. I could understand some of the text in the document, but not all of it. I submitted copies of the documents to the German Genealogy forum on the FamilySearch Community site.¹⁵ I received a partial translation from Baerbel Johnson, one of their German research experts.

Essentially, the documents stated that Christiana had pledged marriage to Reverend Steiner and wished to emigrate to America to marry there. Her father also affirmed that she had saved 330 *Gulden* of her own money and he would add 150 *Gulden* to that amount. The final date of approval was February 1847. This information, together with that found in the family register, dated her emigration to within a few weeks.

Based on the dates included in these sources and her known marriage date, I was able to narrow the search for Christiana on a passenger list to a period of a few weeks. Her record would not have been found by simply entering one or both of her given and surname. It was only found by trying a variety of wildcard combinations and closely examining the results. Eventually I saw an entry for Nanette Greuter, who arrived on 7 April 1847 on the ship *Albany* from Le Havre. According to her descendants, Christiana was known to her family as Nanette. Her age on the passenger list matched precisely with her known birth date. Finally, it is quite possible that someone misinterpreted the name Gräter written in German Gothic script. It appears to be spelled Greuter on the copy of the passenger list.

While John Steiner was a pastor in Ohio he became associated with the Evangelical movement. He was among a group of several pastors who organized the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirchenverein* in Ohio (German Evangelical Church Association).¹⁶ As German immigrants began to establish churches in the newly settled United States territories in the mid-1800s, they tended to resist the organized denominations of Germany and the eastern states. They were heavily influenced by the Pietist movement in Europe. Among other concepts, they emphasized local church independence. The Basel Mission was organized by men with a similar philosophy, which might explain Steiner's commitment to the cause. The Evangelical Association eventually became the Evangelical Synod of North America. In 1921 they merged with the Reformed Church to become the Evangelical and

¹⁴ Ludwigsburg (Württemberg). Oberamt, "Auswanderungen, 1808–1924," Bd. 210 1845–1848, emigration documents for Christiana Gräter, FHL microfilm # 837987 (DGS # 8247758), images 328 – 330.

¹⁵ Found under Help → Community on the FamilySearch website.
https://community.familysearch.org/s/workgroup/Workgroup__c/Default

¹⁶ Schneider, Carl E., *The German Church on the American Frontier: A Study in the Rise of Religion Among the Germans of the West, Based on the History of the Evangelischer Kirchenverein Des Westens (Evangelical Church Society of the West) 1840 – 1866*, (United States: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009), pp. 161, 391–395, 487,
<https://libsysdigi.library.illinois.edu/OCA/Books2012-02/germanchurchonam00schn/germanchurchonam00schn.pdf>.

Reformed Church. This became the United Church of Christ in 1957 when they merged with the Congregational denomination.¹⁷ One can argue that Steiner was one of the early organizers of this independent movement.

Steiner found his parish in Canal Dover to be a difficult assignment because it involved riding horseback to five different churches. In November 1847 he accepted a call to St. John's Church in Massillon, Ohio. From 1853 until 1856 he was at Zion Lutheran Church in Liverpool Township, Medina County, Ohio. From 1858 he was in Cleveland, where he became pastor of the newly formed Second German Evangelical Church.¹⁸ This church later joined the Evangelical Synod of North America. Four sons and a daughter were born between 1848 and 1855 in Massillon and Liverpool Township. The sons all died within the period of one month in 1856. Another daughter and son were born in Cleveland, but the son died young. Rosina Amalia (b. 1855) and Eugenia Euphemia Julia Christina (b. 1857) were the only children to survive to adulthood.

By 1867 Steiner had accepted a call from St. John's Second German Lutheran Church in Newark, New Jersey. He then moved in 1869 to St. Paul's Lutheran in Port Chester, New York. In 1870 Steiner was called to Trinity Lutheran church in Kingston (Rondout), New York. He resigned from that congregation in 1878 due to ill health.¹⁹ However, he later served St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Narrowsburg, New York, from 1881 to 1883. The churches in New York and New Jersey were Lutheran. It is unknown why Steiner abandoned his Evangelical roots.

After Steiner's death, the U.S. consul in Nuremberg sent several despatches about Steiner to the State Department. These can be found in State Department archives maintained at the National Archives II facility in College Park, Maryland. The first despatch, sent on 13 November 1884, was simply to inform the State Department that Steiner had died at the home of relatives in Nuremberg. In the second despatch of 9 December he sent an exchange note for 1,092 *Mark* made out to Rev. John M. Steiner. The third despatch was not sent until 13 March 1885. In this final message the consul listed the cash, promissory notes, and personal possessions that Steiner left behind. He also enumerated the costs that Steiner's nephew incurred caring for his uncle, for which he expected to be paid.²⁰

¹⁷ United Church of Christ, *Short Course in the History of the United Church of Christ*, <https://www.ucc.org/about-us/short-course>.

¹⁸ Rose, William Ganson, *Cleveland: The Making of a City* (United States: Kent State University Press, 1990), p. 286.

¹⁹ Hull, Rev. William, *The Lutheran Church in Ulster County, N. Y.*, *The Lutheran Quarterly* (United States: H.C. Neinstedt, 1882), p 545, https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Lutheran_Quarterly/zkVQAQAAMAAJ

²⁰ Despatch Book Official Letters Sent, 27 September 1880 – 12 July 1887, Vol. 137, pp. 325–328, 344–345, Records of the American Consulate in Nürnberg, Germany, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, 1788–ca. 1991, Record Group 84; National Archives at College Park, College Park, Maryland; NAID 1328036. Despatches From U.S. Consuls in Nuremberg, Germany, 1846–1906, (NARA microfilm publication T418, 9 rolls), Record Group 59: General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Roll 5, dispatch #105 and #107; Roll 6, dispatch #114.

Records of Steiner's death were also found in several collections on Ancestry. In their collection **Reports of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, 1835–1974** there is a notice of his death that was sent by the State Department to a newspaper in Poughkeepsie, New York.²¹ The collection **Nuremberg, Germany, Deaths, 1876–1983** is an index to death records in that city. Steiner's death record is included in the index.²² The index includes a certificate number that can be used to request a copy from the Nuremberg city archive, which I did.²³

Steiner's death was reported by his sister, Johanna Regina Magdalena Steiner. The standard form documented his birth date and place, parents, marriage, and death. John was living at *Zwischen der Fleischbänken* #18. Johanna was identified as a *Pfründnerin*, which might be translated as a pauper or resident of a poorhouse. Her address was *Spitalgasse* #14, just a few blocks from where John lived. That was the location of the *Heilig-Geist-Spital* (Holy Ghost Hospital), established in 1339. She was an elderly single woman, probably living in what today would be considered a nursing home.²⁴

Once I knew where John Steiner was living at the time of his death, I searched the records of several Nuremberg city churches on the Archion website. I found an entry for Steiner's death in the burial records (*Bestattungen*) of St. Sebald Church.²⁵ The entry confirmed that Steiner

345

Steiner, at whose house he died:
 cash mks 220.00

a due bill signed by G. F. Beckenmeyer for
 dated Pöschel, June 17/84, payable after \$100.00
 a year with 5% interest.

a due bill signed by Eugen Haught or Haught
 (as this paper is much stained with blood it is impossible
 to read the name exactly) for \$950.00
 dated June 26/84

further:
 one trunk in good condition, containing wearing apparel and
 sundry old books, and a small sash;
 one gold watch with hair-chain;
 one ring.

Nothing could be found of family - spouse, mentioned
 by Mrs. Alldridge.

Mrs. Johanna Steiner claims:

for attendance during 13 days & day mks 10.00	M. 130.00
for cleaning beds, linen &c.	" 25.00
doctor's bill	" 50.00
for funeral expenses (coffin, advertising &c)	" 224.85
for apothecary's bill	" 13.00
	<u>M. 422.85</u>

less cash applied to payment of same \$20.00

Balance M. 402.85

The effects named above are still in the
 hands of Mrs. Johanna Steiner.

I am, Sir,
 Very respectfully
 Your obedient servant
 W. H. H. H. H.
 W. H. H. H.

**Despatch #114, March 13, 1885, Nuremberg
 Consulate to State Department, Inventory of
 Johann M. Steiner, deceased American citizen
 (National Archives, RG 84)**

²¹ Ancestry.com, Reports of Deaths of American Citizens Abroad, 1835–1974 [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010), Rev. John M. Steiner, notification of death, <https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=1616&h=651>.

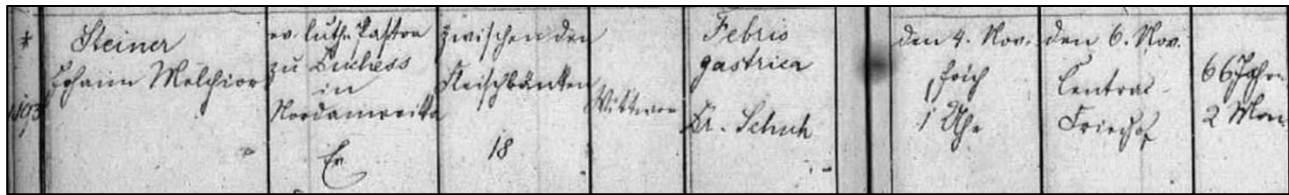
²² Ancestry.com, Nuremberg, Germany, Deaths, 1876–1983 [database on-line], (Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2018), Johann Melchior Steiner entry, certificate #2629, <https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv=1&dbid=61664&h=61780>.

²³ Stadtarchive Nürnberg, <https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv>

²⁴ See the history of this building at <https://www.heilig-geist-spital.de/index.php>

²⁵ [Archion.de](https://www.archion.de), Bayern: Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evang.-Luth. Kirche, Dekanat Nürnberg, Nürnberg-St. Sebald, Bestattungen 1876-1886, Bild 353, <http://www.archion.de/p/570e9aee40/>.

died on 4 November 1884 and was buried on 6 November in the Central Cemetery (today *Westfriedhof*). The location of his burial had always been a mystery to his descendants.



Johann Melchior Steiner death, Nuremberg, Bavaria (*Archion.de*)

Steiner wrote his will on 25 June 1884 in Dutchess County, New York, before he left for Germany, and it was recorded on 29 December 1884.²⁶ He left the majority of his estate to his two daughters. He also gave \$100 each to the Basel Mission, the German Emigration House in New York City, his birth town of Langenzenn, and his brother and sister in Germany.

The search for John Melchior Steiner began with information found in United States consulate records. Many details of his life were found in online family trees. However, with some additional research, more interesting sources of information about his life were discovered. The coincidental discovery of an interested descendant was an unexpected bonus. This success story confirms the value of the work on consulate records that MAGS has undertaken. The consulate record guides and name indexes on our website give MAGS members access to a unique set of information maintained by the National Archives.

DNA-ENTDECKUNGEN

DNA DISCOVERIES

Discovering Family with DNA: A Personal Journey

My own personal journey into my Germanic roots has been tremendously enjoyable, rewarding, and challenging. Thankfully, the German propensity for recordkeeping and disciplined organization has at times afforded an easier path to discovery of one's family history. These records are slowly coming on-line, which will afford even easier access and breakthroughs. The digitization of German Roman Catholic church records will hopefully duplicate the success of Protestant records available in their Archion archive application. Unfortunately, the German penchant for privacy matches their love of accurate records, thus creating some slow progress.

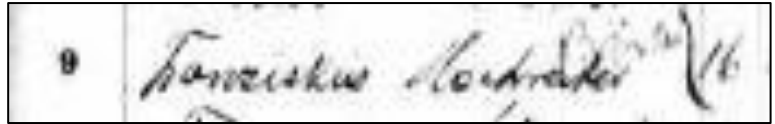


**Andrew
Hochreiter**

²⁶ Ancestry.com, New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659–1999 [database on-line], (Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015), John M. Steiner will, Dutchess County, Wills, Vol 008, 1882–1884, image 361 of 469, https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8800/images/005526468_00361.

The terrible consequences of the Thirty Years War (1618-1648) and the vast destruction of records, created brick walls for many German researchers. My own research ends with a record of Johann Hochreutter who was recorded as dying 15 April 1719 at the age of 65. Although this establishes his birth date to around 1654, there are no church records surviving from that period that would provide additional documentation to enable further research.

My German heritage is on my father's side. I was fortunate that my immigrant ancestors were more recent arrivals, so their village of origin, the market town of Moosbach in *Oberpfalz* (Upper Palatinate) was well known. Although my grandfather died when he was only 38 years old, his younger brother, Michael Hochreiter, lived to 101 years old and was known to many of my family members. His immigration was a humorous story that he loved to tell. When my grandparents married in Rochester, NY, they started a bakery business and a family. As the children kept coming, they wanted my grandfather's sister, Franciska, to come help. They bought and sent her a ticket. But she didn't want to come to America. Instead, younger brother Michael, who was 16 years old, volunteered to come in her place. During my research, I found that the ship's manifest chronicles his arrival on 20 May 1906 in New York City as Franziskus Hochreiter. If this story was not preserved as family oral history, there would not be a record of the personal aspects of Michael's immigration.



My father died when I was about nine years old and although we had paternal aunts, uncles, and cousins, my immediate family knew very little of our father's Germanic heritage. Our mother was born in Canada so there was no lack of British indoctrination to that side of our family history. But with a non-Anglo surname, we were not sure what ancestry to claim. The spelling kept the original German form, which confounded English-speaking Americans. It was especially frustrating when the uninformed addressed us as "Hatch-ree-ter." Our own pronunciation was not much better. This continued until my military tour in Stuttgart, Germany in the late 1970s, when my German friends teased me that I didn't know how to say my own name. This was also when I learned the literal meaning of "tall or high rider."

Even though I knew that the village of my grandparents was Moosbach, I did not go there during my tour. This was because military members were forbidden to go within ten kilometers of the Cold War border with (then) Czechoslovakia. Moosbach lies close to this forbidden zone and, as a company commander, I could not disobey these restrictions. Ironically, it was not until I came to Fort Meade in 1990 that I had an opportunity to pursue a trip to Moosbach. The historic fall of the East-West Wall offered this chance when I was sent as a courier to Germany. At the time, there were two flights weekly, on Sundays and Wednesdays. After delivering the classified documents, I had free time until the return flight back to the States. I rented a car in Frankfurt and drove east on *Bundesautobahn 6* to Nuremberg and then on to Moosbach. In those days, the autobahn ended somewhere north of Moosbach. Today it extends into Czechia to Pilsen and Prague. I vividly remember the typically drizzly German weather with overcast, gray skies and the unique feeling it created of descending into the mists of time towards my ancestors.

The only document I had was one from the Regensburg Bishop's Archives with a small pedigree of Hochreiters in Moosbach. However, it was addressed to a Johann Hanauer in Moosbach. I had no idea who this person was or how he was connected to the Hochreiter name. But when I inquired about this individual at the *Gasthaus* where I was staying, the owner exclaimed that Johann lived nearby. The next morning, he took me to meet him. When we entered the home, I was met by a stern-looking, elderly German. I did not think this would go well. But when I was introduced and my name was mentioned, the German's face lit up with a glow. Johann was the son of my grandfather's sister, Anna Hochreiter, and her first husband, Johann Hanauer. The husband was unfortunately killed in the First World War and Anna inherited the family farm. Anna's son and his family now lived there. It was a thrilling feeling to stand in the old house where my grandfather was born. I was enthusiastically welcomed by these cousins. The only disappointment to this great event was that there are no longer any Hochreiters who live in the village. However, this meeting became a significant milestone in my efforts and developed into a close relationship with several enjoyable future visits that were fruitful in gaining additional information, history, and contacts to enable my pursuit of the Hochreiter genealogy.

Introduction to DNA

In 2005, Dr. Spencer Wells started the Genographic Project at National Geographic. This was a scientific project that identified DNA markers to distinguish branches of the human tree and trace human migration out of Africa around the globe. In addition to testing indigenous populations, public participation was offered to generate funds to benefit the indigenous communities. The public portion recently ended on 30 June 2020. The scientific part made many unique discoveries and contributions to understanding the human diaspora out of Africa. The Nat Geo project was a genetic population study not meant to assist genealogical goals. It provided Y and mitochondrial haplogroups, as well as ethnicity estimates based on their autosomal DNA (atDNA) findings. It did not provide family trees, matching, or other genealogical tools. The DNA results were developed by FamilyTreeDNA (FTDNA), based in Houston, Texas. The company offered a free transfer of your DNA results to their company DNA database. After taking this initial DNA test with Nat Geo, I was intrigued to transfer the results to FTDNA, which had tools and features to support family research using DNA. They invited me to start a Y DNA project for the Hochreiter surname. This exciting prospect fueled my research appetite and curiosity for genetic genealogy. Surname DNA projects are genetic genealogy projects which use genealogical DNA tests to trace male lineages. Because surnames are passed down from father to son in many cultures, and the Y chromosome is passed from father to son with a predictable rate of mutation, people with the same surname can use genealogical DNA testing to determine if they share a genealogical common ancestor. FTDNA has over 10,800 projects related to surname or geographical areas of interest.

My surname project started in 2007 for men who carry the Hochreiter surname or variations such as Hochreuter and Hochreither. I discovered a surname definition in *The Dictionary of American Family Names* (2013, Oxford University Press): "South German: topographic name for someone who lived on or owned a piece of high-lying cleared land, from Middle High German *hohe* 'high' + *riute* 'cleared land' + the agent suffix *-er*." This accounted for the alternative spellings in older records. Although the project is not large, there are participants from various U.S. states, Germany, Hungary,

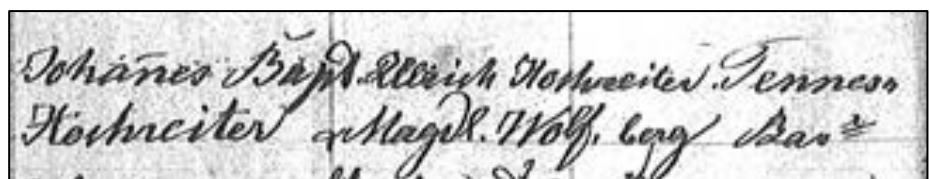
Slovakia, and South Africa (Austrian immigrants). I began testing many of my male relatives including first and second cousins. This established a DNA signature to compare to other unknown participants. All my relatives who descend from Moosbach immigrants belong to Y haplogroup E1b. This was a surprise since I expected a Northern European haplogroup representing my Germanic roots. E1b is a Mediterranean haplogroup broadly covering southern Europe, the Middle East and northern Africa. That finding compelled me to change my ancient ancestry story from a Teutonic chieftain to a Roman legionnaire (darn!). I began a recruitment campaign by downloading address lists from online telephone books and befriending every Hochreiter on Facebook. As I tested more unknown Hochreiters, none of them matched my family's Y DNA. Currently we have participants represented by Y haplogroups R1a (western Europe), R1b (central & eastern Europe), N (northern Eurasia), and L (south Asia). This shows the unrelated origins of families who eventually adopted the surname. It was disappointing that I was not finding related Hochreiter families in Europe.

A Little Professional Help

As the DNA project progressed, I continued to pursue traditional research to build my paternal family tree. The digitization of records provided a new wealth of documents to study, analyze, and synthesize in my family history. I not only researched my own line of Hochreiters, but also others who emigrated to America but settled elsewhere. I also joined the Guild of One Name Studies (<https://one-name.org/>), a group based in the United Kingdom that promotes surname studies and provides invaluable guidance on researching. Despite the success of using U.S. records to trace unrelated Hochreiter lines, my family's recent arrival limits their usefulness. German records were slow to come online, so I decided to find a German researcher to help me. In 2010 I met Reinhard Hofer. I was attracted by the fact that he lives in southeast Bavaria and frequents the Bishop's Archives in Regensburg. Reinhard's research in the church archives uncovered my heritage in Moosbach back to the mid-1600s. In addition, he provided many civil records from the State Archives in Amberg. Most valuable were Reinhard's historical knowledge of surnames, his proposed theories about the family's origin, and assistance in hunting for Hochreiter relatives in the area.

A Little DNA

The Hochreiter DNA project continued to attract various participants albeit unrelated individuals. This suddenly changed when a Hochreiter from Buffalo, New York, tested and joined the project. He matched me and other Rochester relatives. Now granted, Rochester and Buffalo are only 60 miles distance from each other but neither group of families knew the other. To find our common ancestor, the Buffalonians provided information back to their immigrant ancestor, who was named Johann Baptist Hochreiter. I resorted to traditional research to identify where the connection could be. But there was none. Did my grandfather know the family in Buffalo? A connection was never discussed in my family. The records were good on Johann Baptist, who arrived in 1857 (much earlier than my Rochester ancestors). The big breakthrough came with the discovery of his marriage record to Theresa Striegel on 1 August 1858. I pulled the image off the LDS microfilm and studied it meticulously. It contained



Johann's parents' names and hometown. It took some perseverance, but I finally deciphered the town as Tannesberg, Bavaria (note the break in Tennes and berg with abbreviated Bav). The thrill came when I looked at a map and saw that Tannesberg is only ten kilometers from Moosbach.

A Little Luck

At this point, I went back to the online German telephone books and looked for Hochreiters in Tannesberg. I was disappointed as there were none listed. Then I tried some alternate spellings and the name Hochreither appeared. My Moosbach cousin whose grandmother was Anna Hochreiter visited this newfound family. The father, Georg Hochreither agreed to take a DNA test, which confirmed our relationship on the paternal lines. I was thrilled to find a Y-DNA relative but wondered how we were all related. The common adage is that DNA can show that you are related to someone but not how you are related. Traditional genealogy and record research must be undertaken to determine the kinship affiliation. I again turned to my research partner to check the church records for Tannesberg. Reinhard slowly worked his way backwards through multiple generations of Hochreithers in Tannesberg. He started with the Buffalo immigrant, Johann Baptist Hochreiter (born 1828) and his father, Georg Ulrich (b 1794), both named in the Buffalo marriage record. The Tannesberg birth and marriage register for Georg Ulrich names his father as Johann Hochreiter. But there was no record of Johann's birth in the Tannesberg records. On a hunch, Reinhard checked the Moosbach records and discovered Johann's birth recorded in 1759 naming his father as Anton. The marriage of Anton Hochreuter and Susanna Portner was recorded on 13 November 1753. We were able to prove that he was the brother of my ancestor Jakob Kasimer Hochreiter (b. 1715). Their parents, Johann Hochreutter (b. ~1681) and Susanna Schaller, were the common ancestral couple for the Tannesberg/Moosbach families, as well as the Buffalo/Rochester families. This information defined the degree of our relationship for the current generation as seventh cousins.



**My German seventh cousins:
Alfons and Georg Hochreither**

There are still missing data in the pedigree to confirm each generation with documentation. But the Y-DNA results confirm our common patrilinear roots. The table below shows the Genetic Distance (GD) for each marker level. At 37 markers, there is only one difference between my results and those of a first cousin, the Buffalo match, and Georg in Tannesberg. Additional testing with more markers starts to differentiate the family branches, but still within closely related parameters. Our autosomal DNA (atDNA) results at FTDNA do not provide a match since atDNA dissipates with each successive generation. The algorithm at FTDNA precludes matching because the longest matching

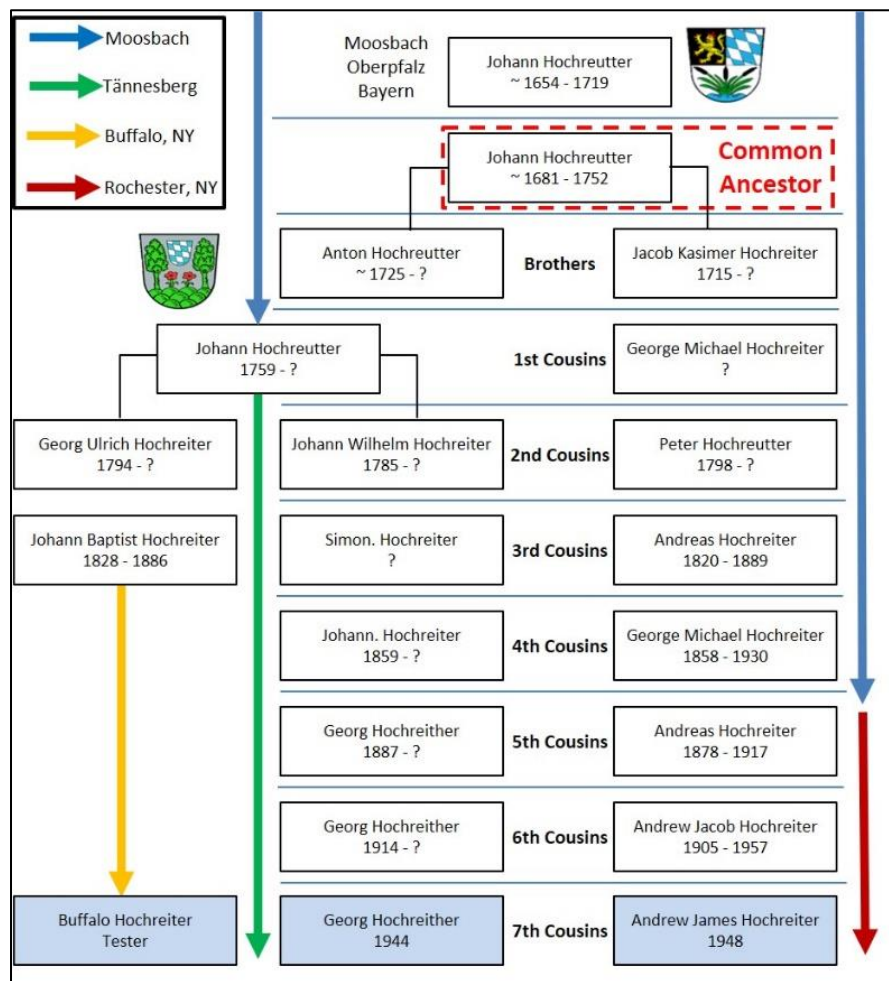
segment block must meet the threshold of nine centimorgans (cM). An analysis was made with tools at the third-party website GEDmatch (<https://www.gedmatch.com/>). The One-to-One Comparison tool can be set to identify very small segments of 3 cM. A first cousin match is included to demonstrate differences and similarities of various test results.

Name	Y DNA			Autosomal DNA		
	GD at 37	GD at 67	GD at 111	Shared cM	Longest Block	Relationship
Buffalo Match	1	1	3	52.9 cM	6.3 cM	5C-8C: 23%
Tännesberg Match	1	1	5	39.5 cM	4.6 cM	5C-8C: 49%
First Cousin Match	1	2	2	822 cM	96 cM	1C: 95%

Did my Moosbach ancestors know their cousins in Tännesberg? Just as the Rochester and Buffalo families were unaware of our common origins, distance and time erases connections. The memory of that relationship probably faded just as the autosomal DNA did. But thanks to a combination of DNA testing and traditional sleuthing, I have reconnected with long-lost branches of my patrilineal family.

Andrew Hochreiter, MEd, MIS, is a genetic genealogist who manages multiple DNA surname projects and has successfully applied DNA to trace

several related family branches overseas. He is an experienced genealogist and has 12 years involved with genetic genealogy. He instructs continuing education courses in basic and advanced genetic genealogy at Howard Community College in Columbia, MD. He is a facilitator for the genetic genealogy module of the on-line Genealogical Research Course at Boston University.



UNSERE SPRACHBLÄTTER

OUR LANGUAGE LEAVES

Ortsnamenkunde:**The Study of Town & Village Names**

Several years ago, while surfing the web for sites related to German genealogy, I stumbled upon a very interesting graphic that I now routinely open and review. The graphic is a dot-distribution chart of 54 smaller maps of modern-day Germany, with each smaller map showing where there are villages whose names end with a different suffix.

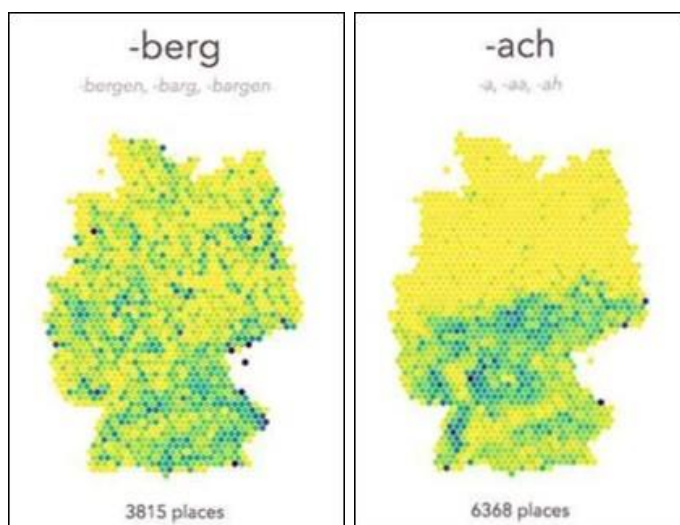


Ken Weaver

My thinking at the time was that I had discovered the magic grail and I could now help fellow German researchers with whom I work find that elusive home village of their German ancestors! Unfortunately, what I discovered was that while the graphic was something worthy of study, it was not going to be extremely helpful in locating anybody's village.

Before I share some of the details of the graphic, I did learn that like the study of surnames, there has been much research done in Germany on place names. I learned that the study of such names in English is toponymy; in German *Toponomastik* or *Toponymie*, or using roots of Germanic origin: *Ortsnamenkunde*. (Similarly, and I should have mentioned this in my columns on German family names, the study of surnames is known as onomastiks or onomatology in English and *Onomastik* or *Namenkunde* in German.)

The URL for the graphics so that you can check it out online is: https://www.reddit.com/r/MapPorn/comments/9xpzd8/german_name_place_endings_eg_burg_vs_dorf_vs/. Unfortunately, this graphic does not provide any background as to where the information came from, but various other sources support what is depicted in the 54 small maps.

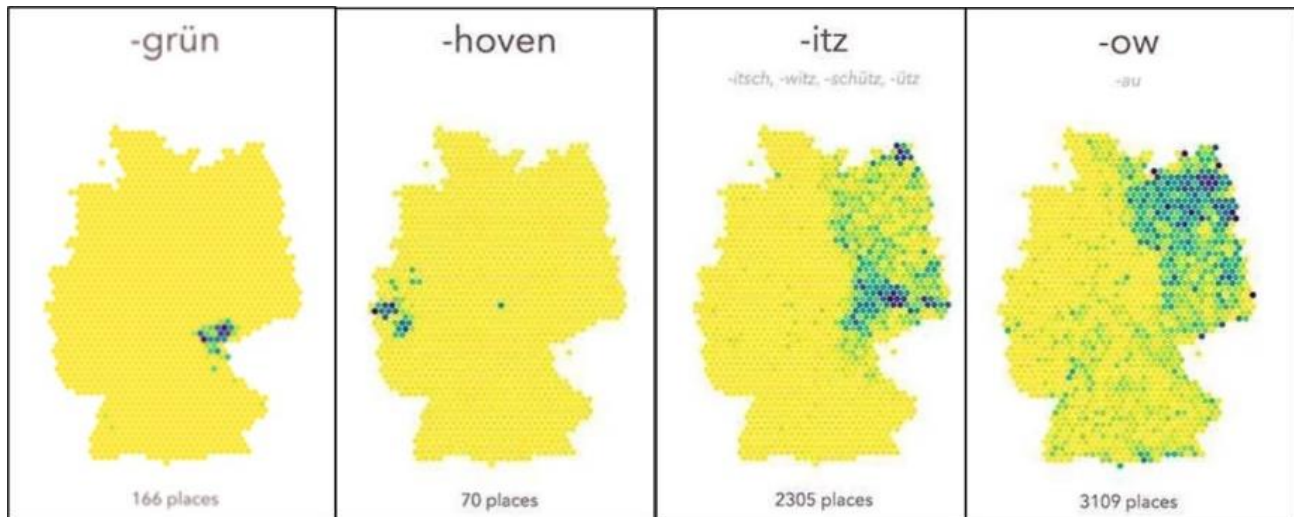


To aid me in my review of the information presented in the small maps, I created a spreadsheet of the 54 suffixes shown and the numerous variations of those suffixes and, sorting the data by the number of occurrences of each suffix/variation, I discovered some astounding numbers. There are over 6,400 places in modern Germany with the suffix *-ede* (variations: *-de*, *-da*, *-te*, *-ta*, *-t*)! Needless to say, with that exorbitant number there is no way this is going to assist a researcher in finding a village of origin. Similarly, over there are over 6,300 place names ending with *-ach* (or *-a*, *-aa*, *-ah*) or *-dorf* (or 11 variations including *-torp*, *-dorp*, and *-torp*).

Another often occurring suffix, *-berg*, can be found in over 3,800 German place names as shown in the image above from the online graphic.

What becomes apparent just from these two images is that villages with the ending *-berg* are found all over Germany, while those ending in *-ach* are located in the more southern regions.

At the other end of the spectrum are those place names that occur very infrequently, such as *-graben* which only occurs in 37 place names, or *-siefen* (*-seifen*) which is found only 36 times. Reviewing the occurrences of the place names ending with *-grün* or *-hoven*, it becomes fairly obvious that these villages are located in very specific locations within German borders. Similarly, places ending with *-itz* or *-ow* reflect the Polish language influence in the naming of German towns and villages.



So that you have a complete understanding of the many suffixes found on the graphic, the list of 54 is provided here, without the numerous variations that are related to each one.

-ach, -ar, -ate, -au, -bach, -berg, -born, -bruch, -bruck, -burg, -bühl, -büttel, -dorf, -ede, -feld, -furt, -graben, -grün, -hag, -hau, -hausen, -heim, -hof, -horn, -horst, -hoven, -hütte, -ich, -in, -ing, -inghausen, -itz, -kirch, -leben, -leiten, -loh, -mar, -ow, -rod, -scheid, -siefen, -siel, -stadt, -stein, -tal, -torf, -um, --up, -wald, -weg, -weiler, -werder, -winkel, -zell

If you speak any German at all, you may recognize that most of the suffixes are standalone German words: *-berg* (mountain), *-bruck* (bridge), *-burg* (castle), *-dorf* (village), *-furt* (ford, where one crosses the river), *-heim* (home), *-kirch* (church), *-tal* (valley), just to mention few. A very good list of the meanings of 32 of the 54 suffixes can be found at:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_toponymy. Most of the suffixes defined in this particular list also provide examples of places that can be found in Germany.

While I have focused on suffixes found in German place names, there are numerous prefixes that can be found as well: *Alt-*, *Groß-*, *Hoh-*, *Klein-*, *Neu-*, *Nieder-*, *Ober-*, *Unter-*, *Kirch-* (Old, Big, High, Little, New, Lower, Upper, Under, Church). If the village happens to be a spa, its name will more than likely begin with the separate word *Bad* (bath) as in the city in Hessen *Bad Nauheim*. The practice of adding a prefix to a place name is common and even the smallest of villages might have a suburb with the prefix *Ober-* or *Nieder-*, as in the case of two villages in Hessen named *Wetter* and

right down the road its suburb *Niederwetter*. The Wikipedia site mentioned above provides more examples of the use of the various prefixes.

No discussion of German place names would be complete without at least a brief look at the various gazetteers available for your use. A gazetteer is a geographic dictionary and the one that has received the most attention lately is the online version of *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs- Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs*. This valuable resource takes a look at the German empire as it existed in the early 1900s, so it includes territories that are no longer part of modern Germany. While the online version is extremely helpful to the German researcher, not all of the data from each entry has been translated into English, so a look at the actual German text, which is provided, is necessary.

But there are a variety of other geographic dictionaries available, particularly for Austria and Switzerland. You should take a look at the comprehensive list provided on the FamilySearch Wiki at https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Identifying_Place_Names_in_German_documents/. As usual, this wiki page provides a wonderful discussion of the various other issues related to German place names, including a very thorough look at the many phonetic issues related to the spelling of them. An exhaustive list of letter exchanges that may be found in the spelling of the village's name is provided. As most researchers have learned or should have learned a long time ago, spelling doesn't count and is very flexible, to say the very least!

One other item that is noteworthy is that place names of "old Germany" haven't necessarily disappeared, even if the village is no longer a mailing address in modern Germany. In other words, small village names have become the name of that particular area of a larger municipality. Similarly, Germantown, Pennsylvania, through which so many eighteenth century German immigrants traveled, is no longer a separate postal entity, but that section of Philadelphia is very much known and referred to as Germantown. I have frequently found old German village and town names within larger municipal borders, so if the village is found in a source like *Meyers*, you will probably still find it on a more modern German map.

While my discovery of a very nifty graphic really doesn't help most researchers find that ancestor's elusive village, the study of German toponymy is an interesting one indeed and I have come back to and looked at this depiction of 54 dot-distribution maps many times. But as much as I might like the graphic, because it has no references to research sources and it fails to meet any research standards, I use it only as a guide and not as gospel truth. Please make sure you do the same, not only with this, but all things you stumble upon on the web!

As a native Pennsylvania Dutchman, Weaver can trace most every line of ancestors to a German immigrant in the 18th century, so it was only natural that he learn to speak German and did so under the tutelage of a very inspiring immigrant high school German teacher. Majoring in German at Millersville University, he studied at Philipps-Universität as a junior and upon graduation began a career as a German teacher and later became a principal. Upon retirement from the public schools, he taught at the college level until moving to Florida. Feel free to e-mail suggestions for this column to kenneth.n.weaver@gmail.com.

Finding Ancestors in *Taufscheine*

BY JON CHARLES ACKER, PH.D.

Forty years ago, my grandmother, Dorothy (Pauley) Acker, gave me a family history book on the Bittner and Werley families. That book ignited a fire in me for genealogy. I became extremely passionate about researching my ancestry and also became very involved with the Berks County Genealogical Society in Pennsylvania. I came across some *Taufscheine* for some of my direct ancestors and other relatives in the care of distant family members. They fascinated me and I took photographs of them.

What are *Taufscheine*? *Geburts und Taufschein* is German for “Birth and Baptismal Certificate.” These forms are also called “*Taufschein*.” In German, *Taufschein* is singular while *Taufscheine* is plural. *Taufscheine* are probably the best-known form of Pennsylvania illuminated manuscript and folk art.

Unfortunately, I lost touch with those family members with the *Taufscheine* and after their deaths those forms were lost through an estate sale. It really made me sick. I wondered if I could find those family certificates in public or private collections. So I began searching. I have yet to find any of them, but I hold out hope that I will one day. I have, however, found many *Taufscheine* for other relatives. In searching for those family forms, it created an obsession in me to collect and preserve these documents. I bought my first *Taufschein* in April 2009 and have acquired more than 3,500 since then.

In 2012 I decided I wanted to do a book series on the forms I have collected. The fruits of that effort are finally coming to pass later this year. The Pennsylvania German Society is publishing my first volume as their 2020 membership publication. It is entitled, *To These Parents, A Compendium of Pennsylvania German Taufscheine: Volume 1, Southeastern Pennsylvania*. This is the first of, God-willing, 16 volumes encompassing all of Pennsylvania. Each volume includes 200 forms from my collection for a specified geographic area within the state. This first volume covers the five counties of the Philadelphia metropolitan area (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia).

So what makes my book distinctive from others that deal with *Taufscheine*? Being of Pennsylvania German ancestry myself, I wanted it to be much more than just a “show and tell” about the forms. I decided to add my personal experiences and passions for *Taufscheine* to relate how important these forms can be to the millions of Americans with Pennsylvania German connections. Furthermore, I want to provide perspective to those that commissioned *Taufscheine* for family members, most especially those depicted in the book. To accomplish this, I include a whole section that provides historical and biographical information for the actual families of the *Taufscheine* shown in the book.

Additionally, although more generically, I give the reader a feeling of life during the *Taufschein* era by incorporating artifacts throughout the text that I have collected that are associated with Pennsylvania Germans pertinent to the geographic location. These artifacts include various types of photographs, German-language publications and correspondence, and other religious documents. I provide additional information about these items for added context and educational purposes. Put simply, the contents of the book are an amalgamation of personal and professional, past and present, dealing with the diverse aspects of *Taufscheine*. These aspects include who created and desired these forms, their geographic reach and popularity over time, their common and unique characteristics, their

genealogical importance, their artistry, their personal and monetary value, their link to contemporary scholarship, and much more. The following pages depict some forms for you to get a sense of the magnificence of these artifacts. By the way, all of these forms are relatives of mine. Even though I did not find those lost forms, these are just some of other family forms I have acquired.



Editor's note: Due to space limitations, only one of the forms that Dr. Acker submitted to Der Kurier is included in this issue. More Taufscheine will be included in future issues (see a preview on page 119).

If you are of Pennsylvania German heritage, German-American heritage, or just a fan of Pennsylvania folk art, membership in the Pennsylvania German Society at the "patron" level or higher includes a copy of the annual volume, <https://www.pgs.org/Membership.aspx>.

Aufwiedersehen Sommer!

A Brief Look at Four Beaches in Schleswig-Holstein Prior to World War I

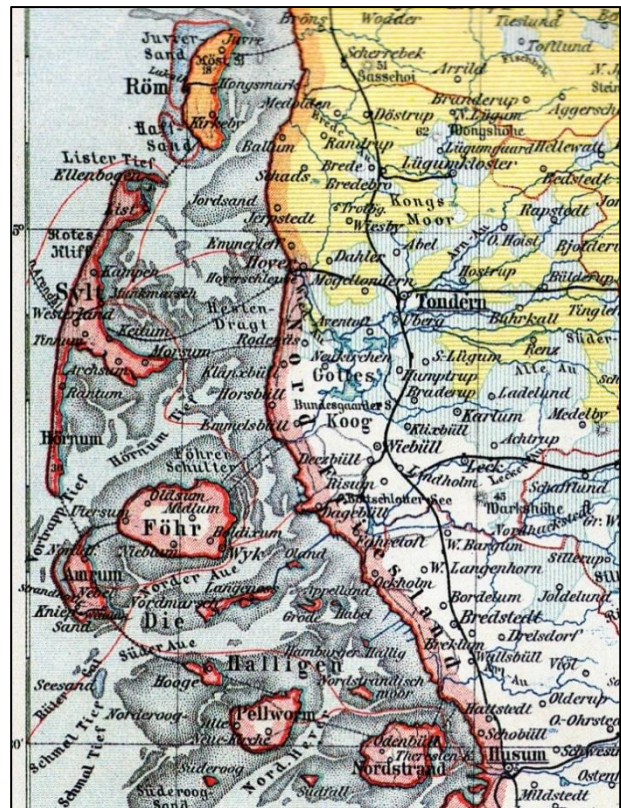
BY KENNETH W. HEGER, PH.D.

As we enter autumn, it might be nice to take a parting glance at summer. For many of us, nothing says summer more than spending some time near the water, a sentiment that was just as true for Germans at the turn of the last century. This article uses vintage postcards to illustrate tourist activities on the beaches of Schleswig-Holstein, including views of beaches, hotels, and waterfront activities. All the images are part of the author's collection.



1897 Map of Schleswig-Holstein. Note the long coastlines on both the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. The yellow coloring at the top indicates the Danish-speaking area.

Citation: *Konversations-Lexicon: Eine Encyclopadie des allgemein Wissens*. 5th Ed. Hermann Julius Meyer: Leipzig, 1897. Author purchased this reproduction from Michiana History Publications, South Bend IN.



This second map is a close-up of the series of islands lying off the west coast of Schleswig-Holstein in the North Sea. These islands have been a major destination for Germans seeking a seaside experience. It is as true today as it was prior to World War I. Note particularly the islands of Sylt and Föhr. These large islands were homes to spas, hotels, and beaches that catered to tourists.

Schleswig-Holstein's Coast

Before you read on, take a moment to peruse the maps on the previous page to orient yourself with Schleswig-Holstein's coasts and the islands and towns along it.

Sylt Island (*die Insel*)

With its sandy beaches and long coast abutting the North Sea, the island of Sylt was a major tourist destination. The town of Westerland boasted a spa and a hotel for overnight guests. Looking closely at the second map you can see the ferry routes that shuttled visitors from the mainland to the island.



A picture of the large spa (*das Kurhaus*) in Westerland



Surfside activities on Sylt:
The men's bathing beach



Surfside activities on Sylt:
A beach crowded with people building sandcastles (*die Strandburgen*)
Note all the flags. Can you spot the German national flag?



Föhr Island

The island of Föhr is almost round. It has lovely beaches which are more protected from the North Sea's often raucous wave action. These two postcards show scenes from Föhr's major tourist site, the town of Wyk. Even a casual glimpse of the two cards show differences between Sylt and Föhr. The number of tourists was smaller. The top card includes images of booths where people could

change from street clothes into bathing attire if they planned to spend time in the water, and the pier



(die Landungsbrücke) where the ships carrying tourists arrived. The bottom card shows the town of Wyk. Notice the large hotel and the calm surf, far calmer than on Sylt.

The Town of Büsum

The town of Büsum is located on the Jutland Peninsula in Holstein. You can find the town easily at the bottom right of the closeup map above. Büsum was not a major tourist destination but afforded people a chance to enjoy the sea without the time and expense of traveling to one of the North Sea islands. Look at the following two images to see what Büsum had to offer.



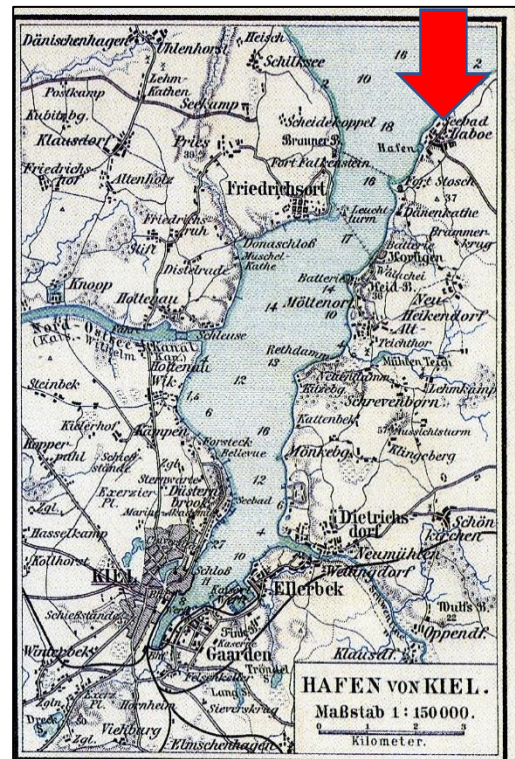


The top image shows the town of Büsum and the inner harbor, full of small fishing vessels. The bottom image shows visitors strolling on the beach at low tide. Pay attention to their attire. It was typical for people to dress up to stroll on the beach, making these images seem strange to our twenty-first century eyes.

The Baltic Resort at Laboe

Schleswig-Holstein also had pleasure beaches on its Baltic Sea coast. The small town of Laboe (*Seebad Laboe*) is one such spot. Laboe is located on the eastern shore of the Kiel bay where the bay meets the Baltic Sea. Taking advantage of the town's small sandy beach (*der Strand*) was an easy way for the residents of the bustling town of Kiel to escape summer's heat and relax near the water.

The map at right shows the towns along the Kiel bay. Kiel sits at the bottom of the bay on the left. About halfway up on the left side you can see the spot where the Kiel Canal (the *Nord-Ostsee Kanal*, also known as the *Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal*) enters the bay. The red arrow points to Laboe.



The postcard paints an idyllic picture of a restful spot, highlighting the town of Laboe and Laboe's small harbor. There is plenty of sand, greenery, and a great view of the Baltic Sea. It must have been a welcome respite from Kiel's hectic pace.

While the parents strolled along the beach or rested, the kids could play in the sand. These children constructed massive sandcastles complete with cannons and national flags. Note the children's garb. Most of the children are wearing casual clothes; some are wearing what looks like a sailor's outfit. Note the boys on the top of the castle on the left. Two of them appear to be wearing one-piece bathing suits so typical of the era.



Conclusion

That ends our quick tour of a few of Schleswig-Holstein's beaches. Hopefully, this brief glimpse of north German beaches will ease your transition to fall. The article sprinkles a few German words useful for your research and to help you expand your German vocabulary.

Die See

Das Kurhaus

Der Strand

Die Landungsbrücke

Die Strandburg

Die Insel

Until summer returns, you might want to learn the following words and impress your friends with your increasing mastery of the German language.

Finding Swiss Church Records in the Bern Canton Archives

BY GUNTER SCHANZENBACHER

Many of you have ancestors who came from Switzerland. Your research may have been hampered in the past because so few Swiss records have been available without traveling to Europe. Fortunately, that is changing as ever more records are becoming available online at a rapid pace. This article introduces you to a site with a wealth of Swiss documents and walks you through the steps I recently took to find a family in Switzerland.

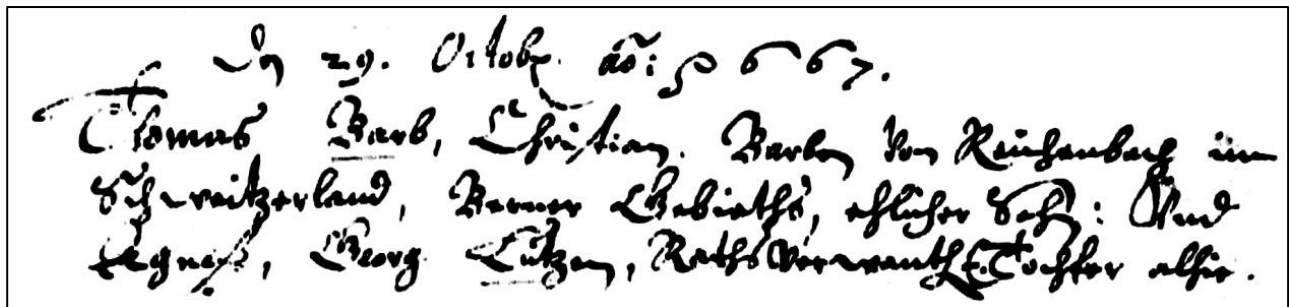
I was researching a family record on Ancestry.com associated with Knittlingen, a town in Baden, Germany. The family name was Barb and the record that started my search held several names. The primary name was Christina Barb, but it also listed Christina's father's name, Thomas Barb, along with Thomas's spouse Agnes. The name Barb was a new name for the family tree, so further research was certainly needed.

Dies.	Infantes.	Parentes.	Parings.
Wednesday	Guistina.	Thomas <u>Doob</u> . W. Aunt.	James Linlis Dintemann & Anna Margretta Dintemann.

Christina Barb birth record, August 1683. Knittlingen, Baden (*Ancestry.com*)

As I continued my research on Ancestry, I found a marriage record for Thomas Barb, Christina's father, which indicated that he did not come from Baden, or from Germany at all for that matter. This marriage record, to the best of my ability, reads:

The 29 October Anno 1667, Thomas Barb, Christian Barb(en) from Reichenbach in Switzerland, Bern district, legitimate son, and Agnes, Georg Lutzen, town council member, legitimate daughter from here.



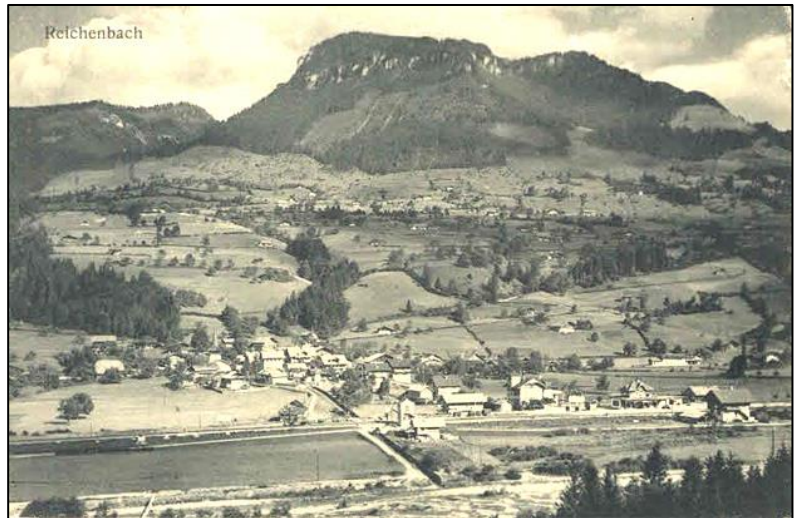
Marriage record of Thomas Barb and Agnes Lutzen, October 1667, Knittlingen, Baden
(Ancestry.com)

Discovering another country is unusual when researching older German birth or marriage records. How to continue your research is the trick. The rest of this article demonstrates how I solved that problem, and how you might as well. Using a Google search, I found that the town of Reichenbach is in the Canton of Bern.

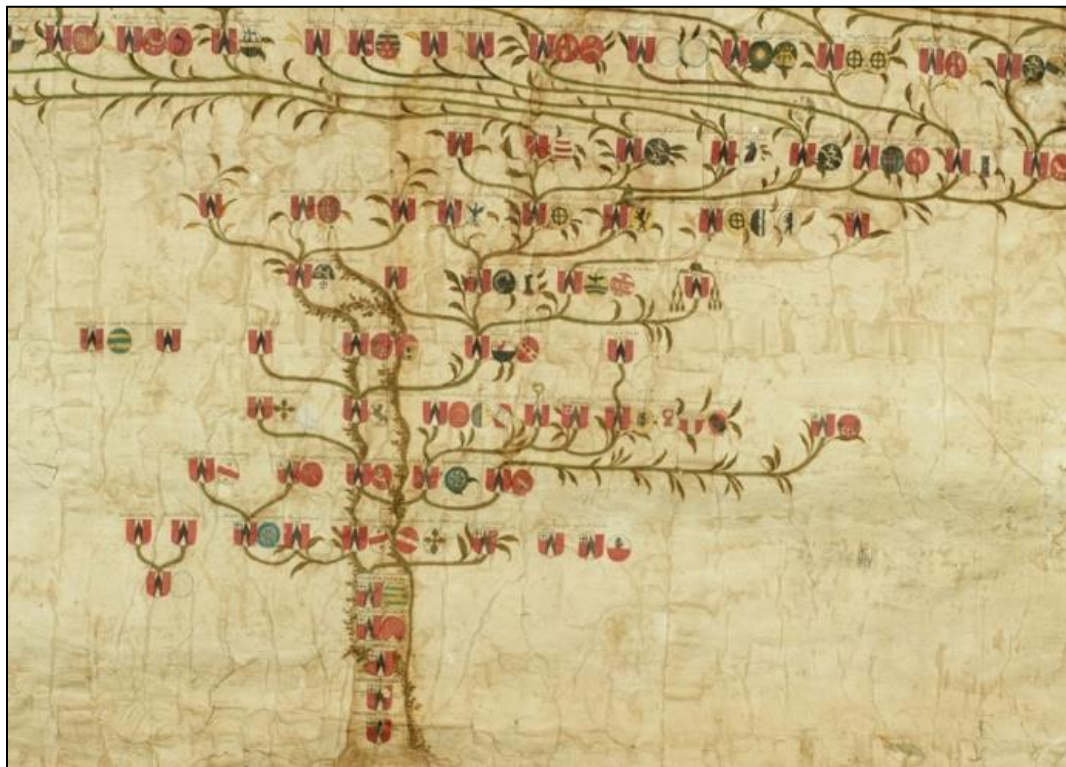
It turned out that family research in Reichenbach was easier than I expected. The Canton of Bern has a wonderful Archives with a user-friendly web site that is very conducive to a genealogist; in fact, you can access the site in English.

The parish records, including baptisms, marriages, and deaths for most Bernese parishes from the time of the Reformation (the early 1500s) until 1876, are stored here. The Archives microfilmed the records and has made the images available online.

Once you have accessed the [website](#), you can look at their online inventory and even the Coat of Arms of the Bernese Families (*Familienwappen*). I started by selecting the Genealogy tab, located on the left of the page. It displayed this beautiful old family tree.



T.A. Reichenbach im Kandertal, Reference Code 29, Bern State Archives, Bern, Switzerland



Family tree of the Erlach family (AD 928) from the Bern Archives

Canton Bern Home de fr

 **Online inventory of the holdings of the State Archives of Canton Bern** Home

Search Last search result Workbooks Shopping cart Info Corner

 Display as PDF

 Place in workbook

 Display selected units of description in the Detail View

 Reduce view to selected unit of description

 Cancel reduction

 Help

Archive plan search

-  Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern
 -  A Kanzleiarchiv
 -  B Verwaltungsarchive
 -  C Staatliche Sammlungen
 -  Urkundenarchiv
 -  Urbarienarchiv
 -  Mandate und amtliche Drucke, Kreisschreiben
 -  Kirchenbücher
 -  K Aarberg Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Aarberg (1549-1875)
 -  K Aarwangen Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Aarwangen (1571-1875)
 -  K Abländschen Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Abländschen (1674-1875)
 -  K Adelboden Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Adelboden (1555-1875)
 -  K Aeschi Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Aeschi bei Spiez (1556-1932)
 -  K Affoltern Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Affoltern im Emmental (1567-1875)
 -  K Albligen Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Albligen (1603-1875)
 -  K Amsoldingen Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Amsoldingen (1661-1875)

1. Go to <https://www.query.sta.be.ch/archivplansuche.aspx?ID=37>.
2. Click the "+" sign next to "Kirchenbücher" to view the available parishes.
3. If your village names starts with N-Z, scroll down to the bottom of the list and click the "+" sign next to "Open the next 100 entries..."

-  K Rapperswil Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Rapperswil (1567-1875)
-  K Reichenbach Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Reichenbach im Kandertal (1558-1875)
 -  K Reichenbach 1 Taufrodel (1558-1583), Eherodel (1558-1585) (1558-1585)
 -  K Reichenbach 2 Taufrodel (1585-1621), Eherodel (1586-1625), Totenrodel (1608-1613) (1585-1625)
 -  K Reichenbach 3 Taufrodel (1621-1670), Eherodel (1625-1669) (1621-1670)
 -  K Reichenbach 4 Taufrodel, Eherodel (1670-1708)
 -  K Reichenbach 5 Taufrodel, Eherodel (1709-1745)
 -  K Reichenbach 6 Taufrodel (1746-1787)
 -  K Reichenbach 7 Taufrodel (1788-1817), Taufrodel, auswärts Getaufte (1774-1820) (1788-1820)
 -  K Reichenbach 8 Taufrodel (1817-1829), Taufrodel, auswärts Getaufte (1775-1829) (1775-1829)
 -  K Reichenbach 9 Taufrodel (1830-1853)
 -  K Reichenbach 10 Taufrodel (1854-1875)
 -  K Reichenbach 11 Taufrodel, auswärts Getaufte (1791-1878)
 -  K Reichenbach 12 Verkündigungs- und Eherodel (1746-1816)
 -  K Reichenbach 13 Verkündigungs- und Eherodel (1817-1847)
 -  K Reichenbach 14 Eherodel (1848-1875)
 -  K Reichenbach 15 Totenrodel (1728-1774)
 -  K Reichenbach 16 Totenrodel (1775-1804)
 -  K Reichenbach 17 Totenrodel (1805-1826)
 -  K Reichenbach 18 Totenrodel (1826-1856)
 -  K Reichenbach 19 Totenrodel (1856-1875)
 -  K Reichenbach 20 Totenrodel, auswärts Verstorbene (1856-1875)
-  K Renan Registres paroissiaux de la paroisse de Renan (1645-1875)

4. Click the "+" sign next to your village of interest to show the records the Archives has.
5. Double-click the type and time period of interest.

K Reichenbach 3 Taufrodel (1621-1670), Eherodel (1625-1669) (1621-1670)

Archive plan context

Staatsarchiv des Kantons Bern

C Staatliche Sammlungen

Kirchenbücher

K Reichenbach Kirchenbücher der Kirchgemeinde Reichenbach im Kandertal (1558-1875)

K Reichenbach 2 Taufrodel (1585-1621), Eherodel (1586-1625), Totenrodel (1608-1613) (1585-1625)

K Reichenbach 3 Taufrodel (1621-1670), Eherodel (1625-1669) (1621-1670)

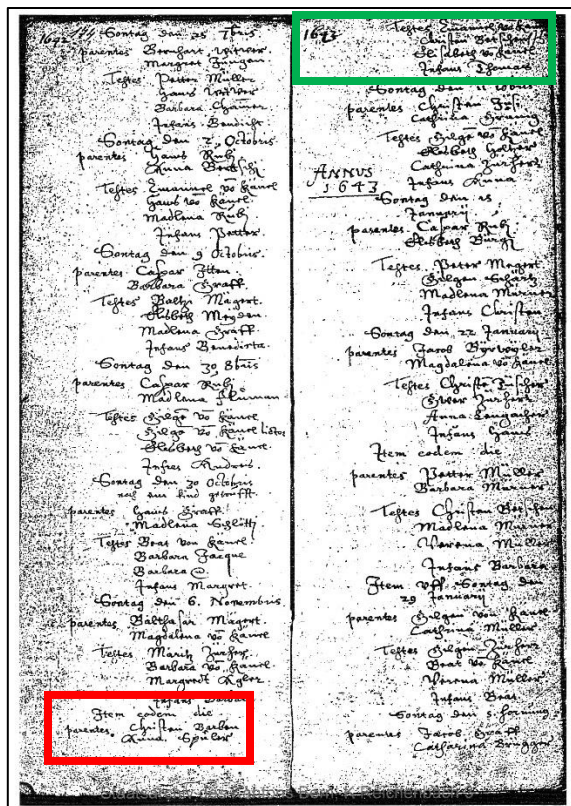
K Reichenbach 4 Taufrodel, Eherodel (1670-1708)

Ref. code:	K Reichenbach 3
Title:	Taufrodel (1621-1670), Eherodel (1625-1669)
Creation date(s):	1621 - 1670
Archival material types:	Akte/Dokument

Files

Files:
1. [K Reichenbach 3.pdf](#)

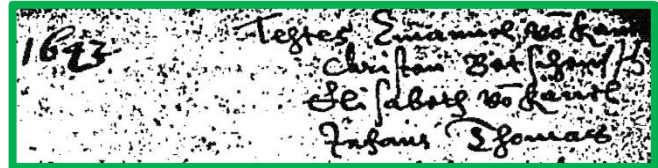
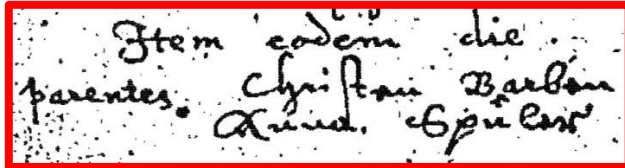
6. Click the PDF link to download and view the church book. The download will take some time.



The page containing Thomas's baptism record in the Reichenbach church book.

As you can see there are many books available for Reichenbach. While not each community has this many books, it was a treasure trove for what I was interested in. My first selection was book #3, covering approximately 1621–1670, because the Ancestry death record listed Thomas's birth as being about 1644. The PDF document allows you to browse the complete book without having to select each page as a separate document. It took less than 30 minutes to find Thomas Barben's (note the change in name) birth record along with his parents' names. The record on Ancestry missed Thomas's birth date by two years; he was actually born on 6 November 1642. It took another couple of hours to verify and collect five of Thomas's siblings and just a bit more time to find the marriage record of his father Christian Barben with his spouse Anna Spüler, Thomas's mother.

One challenge I faced was getting used to the entries and the different script. This was a time that following the articles that Katherine Schober has written us in previous issues of *Der Kurier* articles helped. If you make use of these articles too, you will have little trouble following the writings in these records.



The enlargements above make the layout of this birth record clearer. It lists the parents, Christan Barben and Anna Spüler. The remainder of the record lists the witnesses (*Testes*); the infant's name is Thomas. Be sure to examine each record closely. Clerks were not consistent in where they recorded information on documents. In records in some other years, for example, I found the infant's name between the parents and witnesses.

This report of my recent research project alerts you to the existence of the Bern Canton Archives and illustrates how useful that archives website is. I found this site to be an excellent alternative to FamilySearch. While many, if not all these records are available on FamilySearch, the process is a lot more cumbersome there. I also found the images of records in the Bern Archives much clearer and easier to read than the ones on FamilySearch. Keep in mind you need to know the name of the community for researching the church books, but that is a small ask for a genealogist!

VORSCHRIFT IST VORSCHRIFT

STICK TO THE SCRIPT

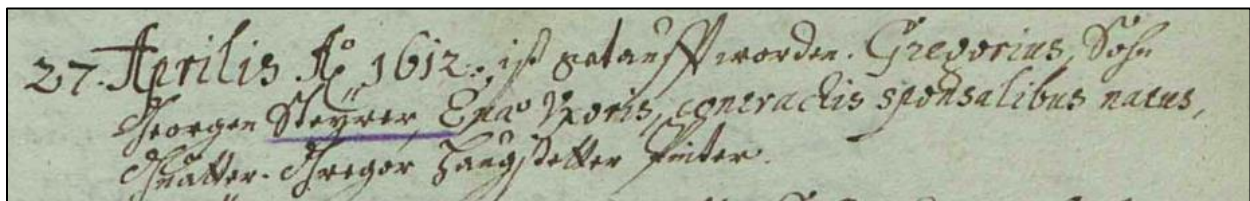
The Most Asked Question about the German Handwriting Is...

As a German handwriting translator, I receive a good number of questions about the old German script. “Is it hard to learn?” “How do you tell the difference between an ‘n’ and an ‘m’?” “What’s that funny B-looking letter I keep seeing?” While these are all great questions (to which you can find the answers at the end of the article!), there is one question that my students and clients ask me more than any other: “Does the old German handwriting vary from region to region?”



Katherine Schober

For genealogists with one line from Switzerland, one from Bavaria, and another line from Schleswig-Holstein, this can be a major concern. Do they need to learn different kinds of script when researching different lines? Fortunately, the answer to this specific question is usually no. But that doesn't mean that the script is always the same! In fact, instead of varying from region to region, the script tends to vary from century to century. Have you ever worked with a document from the 1500s or 1600s? If so, you'll know that the handwriting can look very different from that

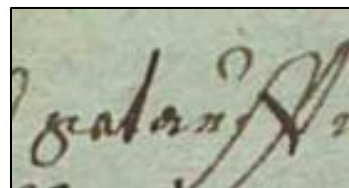


Source: Matricula Online: Ybbs/Donau Taufbuch 01/01

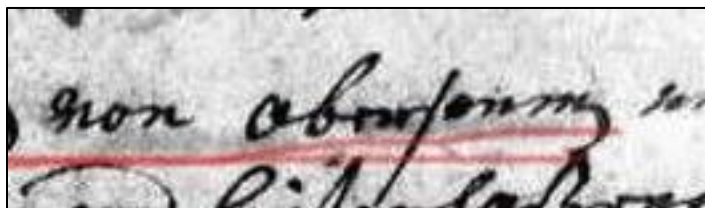
of an eighteenth- or nineteenth-century record! The older handwriting tends to be more decorative, consisting of more loops and flourishes than its later counterparts.

As you can see, the record above from a 1612 church register is a bit decorative, with long, flowing letters that are written rather beautifully. If you are familiar with the script, you may also notice that there are a number of Latin words in this record. This is not surprising, as the farther back in time you go, the more likely that the record (or, at the very least, several words) will be in Latin. One of my favorite words in Latin is the word "uxor", meaning "wife." You may sometimes see it abbreviated "ux." as well.

In older records, it is also common to see a double "f" where a single "f" would be written today. Can you see the two "f"s" going below the line of writing in the word "getaufft" below? This word means "baptized" and would be spelled "getauft" (with one "f") today.



"getaufft"

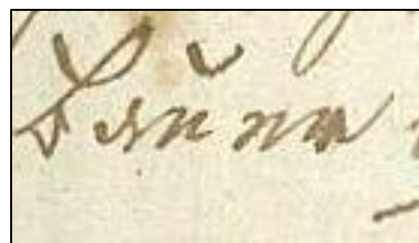


"von Oberseemen"

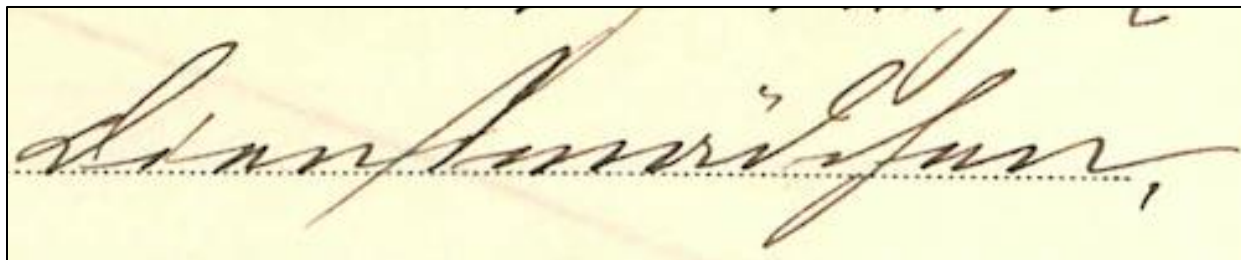
Another common occurrence in these older documents is the abbreviation for "en." Instead of writing out the letters "e-n," the scribe would sometimes draw a line going down and off to one side (following the preceding letter).

In the above example from 1645, can you see how the second underlined word ends with a line going downward? This line symbolizes "en," which turns the town listed here—which originally looks like "Oberseem"—into the town of "Oberseemen." (Note: Sometimes this line going down can be written as a loop as well.)

As we move into the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the handwriting becomes more of the "standard" *Kurrentschrift* style of handwriting that we've previously discussed in this column. As a general rule, the letters should resemble those in the *Kurrentschrift* key at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurrent>. The words "Bauer" (farmer) and "Dienstmädchen" (maid) are also prime examples of the more standard *Kurrentschrift* style of handwriting that you will find in eighteenth and nineteenth-century records.

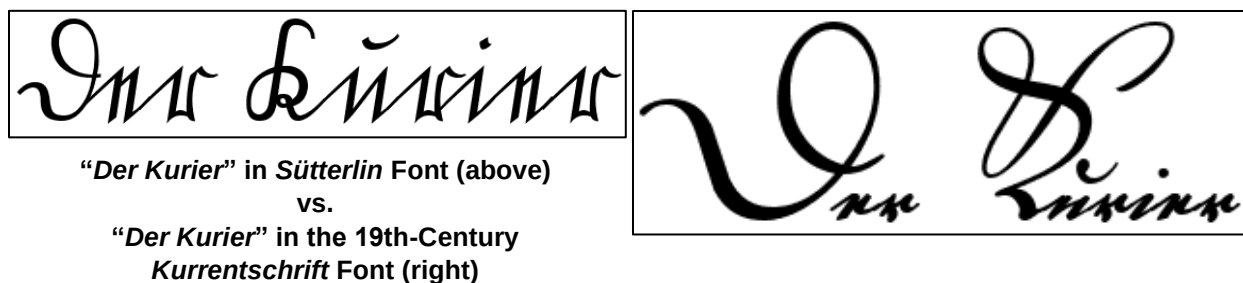


"Bauer"



"Dienstmädchen"

The old German handwriting evolves yet again in the twentieth century—in 1911, to be exact. At this time, Ludwig Sütterlin created a more “modern” handwriting script, which was subsequently named after him. If your ancestor learned to write after 1915, when the script began to be introduced in schools, this version of the script would likely have been the handwriting style he or she then used. See an example of the *Sütterlin* alphabet at <http://www.suetterlinschrift.de/Englisch/Sutterlin.htm>. As you’ll see, these letters are similar to the “regular” *Kurrentschrift* characters (it is a form of *Kurrent*, after all), but this newer version of the script was written more vertically and with sharper angles than its earlier counterpart.



In conclusion, while the script usually does not differ from region to region, it did develop from century to century. Being familiar with these writing styles that were common in different time periods can be very helpful for transcribing your genealogy documents. Why? Once you identify the type of script used in your record, you can then find an alphabet key for that specific type of script online and print it out (or be on the lookout for many loops and flourishes if you have an older document—those keys are harder to find!). You can then use this key to train your eyes to look for specific letters in your document.

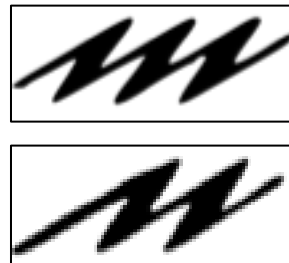
It is also important to remember that handwriting will vary slightly from author to author. Just as no two people’s handwriting is exactly alike today, scribes of the past also had slightly different handwriting styles. Many genealogists like to make their own alphabet key for their specific scribe, which can be very helpful if you are working with letters, diaries, multiple records from the same church book, or any other documents where the same scribe has written multiple pages. Happy transcribing!

1. Is it hard to learn?

Learning the old handwriting is just like any skill. The more you practice, the easier it gets. If you want a fun and exciting way to learn the handwriting (complete with videos, flashcards, and games), you can check out my self-paced online course here: <https://german-handwriting.teachable.com/>. Send me an e-mail at language@sktranslations.com if you want a special discount for Der Kurier readers!

2. What’s the difference between an “m” and an “n”?

An “m” has four points at the bottom of the letter, while an “n” has three. Count the points at the bottom to see which letter you are dealing with. The letter “m” with four points at the bottom (top) vs. the letter “n” with only three points (bottom).



3. “What’s that funny B-looking letter?”

The Eszett “ß” is a German letter that makes the sound “ss.” The ß is still used in German today, although you may see it in more words in the past than you will now.

Schober is the author of the book, *Tips and Tricks of Deciphering German Handwriting*, and creator of the online course, *Reading the Old German Handwriting*. Her business is SK Translations, found on the web at www.SKTranslations.com.

MAGS Welcomes These New Members

A maximum of four surnames being researched by each new member appears *in bold parentheses and italics* following the new member’s name. Space does not permit more than four surnames or most spelling variations. MAGS encourages all members to submit free queries to the queries editor regarding specific ancestors.

ANNE BORG of NEWTON, MA

(Swingle, Bechte, Geisinger, Meschter)

KATHY BRUNS of LAKEWOOD RANCH, FL

(Latteman, Englebecht, Scheele, Krebs)

KIM CALDWELL of ELK GROVE, CA

(Paulat, Kaminski)

MAX CARPENTER of INDIANAPOLIS, IN

(No Names)

ROBIN COMFORT of CHESAPEAKE, VA

(Hemlepp)

LINDA DeNARDO of WEST CHESTER, PA

(Bottger, Lissmann, Tejan)

EARL EBERT of OXFORD, CT

(No Names)

ROBERT ETCHBERGER of LEBANON, PA

(No Names)

JEANIE GLASER of HARRISBURG, PA

(Bittinger, Eigender, Noll, Borst)

CYNTHIA HALL of CADDO MILLS, TX

(Yingling, Lowmaster, Kirkland, Anderson)

PAMELA HOLLAND of SWAMPSCOTT, MA

(Kopperschmidt, Behnke, Zerwig, Kreilick)

LAURA KAISER of OVERLAND PARK, KS

(Katzenberger, Ebling, Miesse, Dundore)

LISE MARTINA of NEW YORK, NY

(Bernhardt, Goldstein, Siems, Teichner)

BLANCHE McGUIRE of PITTSBURGH, PA

(Schneider, Eckenrode, Conrad/Kunrat, Schettig)

JANET McNAUGHTON of WERNERSVILLE, PA

(Artzberger, Berkebile, Rickenbrode, Theiss)

PAMELA PASCHKE of BOCA RATON, FL

(Kauffman, Paschke, Kachlein, Knobel)

STEVEN PERKINS of UNION, NJ

(Strunk/Strunck/Strunks, Stumpf, Bishop)

STEPHEN SOLLER of CEDAR POINT, NC

(Soller, Weintraut, Bogemann, Ruhlman)

SHAREE SOLOW of ELKINS PARK, PA

(Althausen, Kaiser, Thill, Zody)

CYNTHIA & DAVID STEINHOFF of SEVERNE PARK, MD

(Steinhoff, Riehm, Ream)

PETER SWARTZ of MECHANICSBURG, PA

(Schwartz, Swartz, Schwarz)

DIANNE TURPIN of CHESTERTOWN, MD

(Klebe, Klise)

MARY VIDLAK of WILLIAMSBURG, VA

(Neidhamer, Arnold)

MARC WHEAT of LOCUST GROVE, VA

(Haeger, Weaver, Otterbach, Mookamp)

KATHLEEN WILLIAMS of LEAGUE CITY, TX

(Crissman, Geist, Kreider, Musser)

DER KALENDER

THE CALENDAR

2020

17-18 October. MAGS Fall Conference, Virtual via Zoom. The Legal Genealogist Judy G. Russell presents a program on German-genealogy-specific topics as well as how to use tax lists and prison records in your research.

<https://magsgen.com/eventListings.php?nm=19#er131>

<https://magsgen.com/store.php?cid=4&sid=1&acs=A&ars=A> to register

24 October. Ohio Chapter of Palatines to America 2020 German Genealogy Fall Seminar, Der Dutchman Restaurant, Plain City, OH. Claire Gebben runs sessions on German handwriting, immigration, and compiling your genealogy research into a memoir.

<https://oh-palam.org/>

6-7 November. 2020 North Carolina Genealogical Society Fall Conference, McKimmon Conference and Training Center, Raleigh, NC.

<https://www.ncgenealogy.org/event/save-the-date-2020-fall-conference/>

2021

25-27 February. RootsTech Connect 2021, Virtual.

<https://www.rootstech.org/?lang=eng>

14-17 April. Ohio Genealogical Society 2021 Conference, "Bringin' It Home", Nationwide Hotel & Conference Center, Lewis Center, OH. Featuring Peggy Lauritzen, D. Joshua Taylor, and Ari Wikins.

<https://www.ogsconference.org/>

19-22 May. National Genealogical Society Family History Conference, "Deep Roots of a Nation", Greater Richmond Convention Center, Richmond, VA. Learn new techniques, resources, and strategies to sharpen your family history skills.

<https://conference.ngsgenealogy.org/>

4-5 and 11-12 June. Two separate virtual conferences—Genetic Genealogy and Jamboree.

<http://genealogyjamboree.com/2021/>



A preview of Taufscheine to come in future issues of Der Kurier



The Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society

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List four names you are researching.

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New members joining anytime during the
calendar year receive all issues for the year.