Houston Public Library
Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research
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**German Family History Resources at the Houston Public Library /
Clayton Library Center for Genealogical Research
May 2022**

Clayton Library offers beginner, intermediate, and advanced level resources to help you with your German research. Beginner resources include general guidebooks and reference resources as well as searchable databases. Intermediate resources expand beyond vital records to include other town-specific or state-specific record groups. Advanced resources are unique German-language collections that delve deeply into topics such as, regional history or the history of surnames. Here are some examples of each kind. Each book cited is found in Clayton's Germany book section under the given call number.

Beginner Level Resources

[Brandt, Edward R., Germanic genealogy: A guide to worldwide sources and migration patterns. Germanic Genealogy Society, [2007] (G373 GERMAN 3ED)](link)
This book is an excellent overall guide for conducting Germanic genealogy research. It covers a wide variety of topics such as: finding your ancestor's place of origin using U.S. records; passenger departure and arrival lists; personal and place name studies; political geography and history of areas; migration patterns and tips for researching ethnic Germans living in other countries; sample letters for overseas correspondence; tips for reading old script and understanding basic German vocabulary; addresses for prominent Germanic genealogical associations; and much more.

[Thode, Ernest. German-English genealogical dictionary. Genealogical Pub. Co., [1992] (T449 GERMAN)](link)
This handy reference source has a distinct advantage over a standard German-English dictionary - it can help you to decipher old terms, expressions, and abbreviations found in German genealogical records that are no longer in use today. When looking at genealogical documents written in German, be sure to have this book by your side.

Family Search
FamilySearch.org (https://familysearch.org) is the most used online resource for international records research, including German records. When getting started, it is helpful to search the German databases on FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/search/collection/list) for the names you are seeking. You can also do a place-name search in the FamilySearch catalog (https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog) to see if you can find the town name you are researching, and if any records for that town are available online or on microfilm. When doing global searches of Family Search databases from any page of Family Search, but it is important to remember that those databases which show "Browse Images" are not going to be included in your search results, since they are not yet indexed. These must be browsed image by image.

Intermediate Level Resources

[Hansen, Kevan M., Map guide to German parish registers. ©2004- (H249 GERMAN (Multi vols)](#)
This multi-volume set is designed to aid the researcher in understanding and visualizing the areas under the jurisdiction of the various church parishes, both Catholic and Lutheran, in specific states in Germany. The volumes are first divided by state, Baden, Bavaria, Hessen, etc., so it is important to know first in which state the person resided. It is most useful if the town name is also known, as there is a Town Index at the back of each volume that shows which Catholic and Lutheran parishes cover that town.

The books' maps allow you to see neighboring parishes, which can be useful if only a general area of residence is known. The Family History Library microfilm numbers are included for each locality, if its records have been microfilmed. Information about other major record groups for that area, emigration books, lineage books, and local/regional/state archives and repositories, is included as well.

Advanced Level Resources

[Siebmacher, Johann. Wappenbuch Collection](#)
The Wappenbuch collection is a German-language series of 35 volumes on German heraldry, first begun by Johann Siebmacher in the early 1600s, and later expanded with new editions as recently as 1967. This series chronicles the historical occurrence and development of surnames as they relate to the coats-of-arms of German nobility and prominent families. The volumes also contain illustrations of the coats-of-arms, as well as descriptions of the colors and symbols used in them.

To use this set, first look at the General-Index zu den Siebmacher'schen Wappenbüchern, 1605-1967 (Siebmacher General Index), which is an index to all 35 volumes in the set. You can look up a surname in the General Index and it will give you the volume abbreviation and the page number in which that name can be found. See the "Wappenbuch User's Guide" (filed with these books) for more tips on using this collection.

[Deutsches Geschlechterbuch Collection](#) *(D486 GERMAN)*
The Deutsches Geschlechterbuch collection (221 volumes) is a German-language lineage book collection pertaining to prominent and middle-class German families, first begun in the late 1800s, with new volumes published as recently as 2007. It follows a format similar to lineage books of U.S. lineage societies like the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), so even if you have no knowledge of German, you can look for surnames of interest in the indexes of these volumes, which are divided and arranged by German state, and then look for the special symbols indicating birth/marriage/death.

It is then relatively easy to see the order of ancestry and/or descent by following these symbols and dates. For more information on using this collection, please see the thin "Deutsches Geschlecterbuch User's Guide" located on the shelf at the beginning of the volumes. Note that Clayton Library has volumes 1-75 of this collection on microfilm (2nd floor) and volumes 120-221 in book form. Volumes 76-119 are out of print and not currently available at Clayton Library.

Additional Resources

Thomsen's Genealogical Center. Atlas of the German Empire, 1892 (oversize book) Thomsen's Genealogical Center, [1989] A881 GERMAN

Hall, Charles M. Atlantic Bridge to Germany (Vols. 1 - 10) by Charles M. Hall (H174 GERMAN)

Die Ahnenlisten-Kartei (Vols. 1 - 11) by Hans Nessler (N465 GERMAN)

Family Tree Historical Atlas of Germany by James M. Beidler (B422 GERMAN)

Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns by Edward R. Brandt (G373 GERMAN (3ED)

Germans to America 1840-1897 (Series I Vols. 1 – 67, Series II Vols. 1 – 7) by William P. Filby (325.243 G373 USA)

Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutsches Reichs (Vols. 1-3) by Raymond S. Wright, III
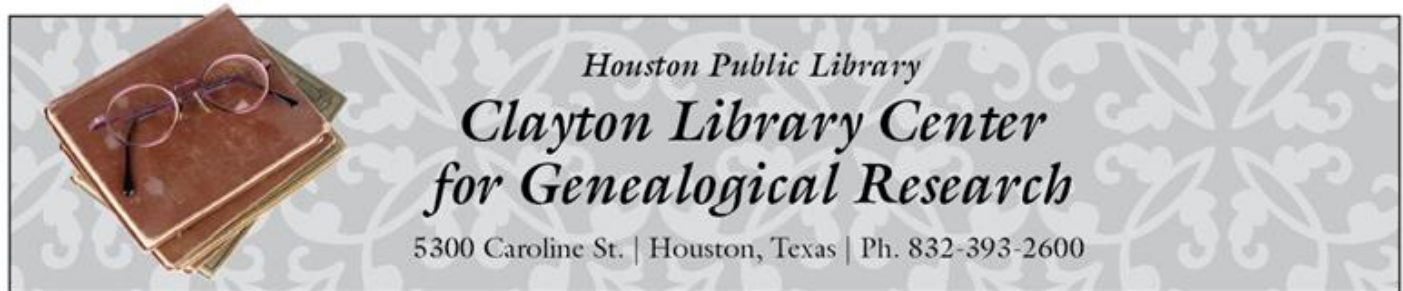

<u>Microfilm</u>

Deutsches Geschlechterbuch (Vols. 1 - 75)
Cabinet: 65 Drawer: 03

Hamburg Passenger Lists (1850-1934)
Cabinet: 44 Drawer: 04

It is certainly possible to find a lot of records on German ancestors using these resources, and the more you know about the town of origin, the more records you will be able to find. Even if you don't speak the language, you can do basic record analysis and database searches just by knowing a few key words. Good luck in your research!

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May 2022 / Additional Sources

Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania. Palatine church visitations, 1609: deanery of Kusel. Genealogical Pub. Co., 1980.(G326 GERMAN)

Hacker, Werner. Auswanderungen aus dem früheren Hochstift Speyer nach Südosteuropa und Übersee im XVIII. Jahrhundert : eine Dokumentation in Regestenform nach Unterlagen des Badischen Generallandesarchivs Karlsruhe. Heimatstelle Pfalz, 1969.(H118 GERMAN)

Hain, Hans. Aus der Vergangenheit des Dorfes Olnhausen : Veroffentlicht durch die Gemeinde Jagsthausen-Olnhausen anlalslich der 1200-Jahr-Feier Mai 1981. H. v. Olhanusen, 1981?. (H152 GERMAN)

Genealogical Society of Pennsylvania. Palatine church visitations, 1609: deanery of Kusel. Genealogical Pub. Co., 1980.(G326 GERMAN)

Köbele, Albert. Ortssippenbuch Altenheim II : im Ortenaukreis in Baden : Zweiter Teil 1973-1980. Grafenhausen bei Lahr : Selbstverlag des Herausgebers,(O78 GERMAN)

Smelser, Ronald M., Preliminary survey of the German collection. University of Utah Press, 1979. (S638 GERMAN)

Von-Maszewski, W. M. German emigration ships to New Orleans 1865-1869. W. M-Maszewski 1997.(V946 GERMAN)