

# Assignment 3: German History and Geography

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Course: SLCC CEGN 0012 (Spring 2014)

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Assignment 3: Additions to Research Binder – History and Geography

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## Objectives, Focus

1. Locate and upload two maps for your country. The first map should show the entire country and main divisions. The second map should be specific to the area where your ancestors lived.
2. Create a list of counties etc. for your country. Include pertinent information next to the name.
3. Compile a gazetteers or geographic dictionary list with titles, authors, and publication information next to the name. Upload the list.
4. Include a historic timeline for your country. Include key military events.
5. Include these items in your Research Binder. [I continue to repackage my assignment documents in my Research Binder (along with new information that I discover along the way) periodically, as I have time.]

In this assignment I have focused on the German states from which my and my husband's ancestors migrated:

- **Alsace-Lorraine** (Elsass-Lothringen), now part of France, where some of my husband's ancestors (surname Rebmann) were from. They migrated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century from the town of Niederbronn to Buffalo, New York. The Old World location was revealed in a World War I draft record for a descendant.
- **Baden-Württemberg**, where my "Dutch" ancestors (surname Metsch) lived before they immigrated to Amsterdam, Netherlands
- **Bavaria** (Bayern), where some of my husband's ancestors (surname Kalert) were from, according to information in an immigration record and the 1880 U.S. federal census Unfortunately, the German city or town is not known at this time. They arrived in New Orleans in Mar 1857 and made their way up the Mississippi River to St. Louis.
- **Hamburg**, a German city-state, where descendants of one of my great-great grandfathers (the focus person for this course, surname Schreiter) now live. I visited these cousins in 2004.

- **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**, where some of my husband’s ancestors (surname Düjer or Düger or Dueger). The Old World location (in Mecklenburg-Schwerin) was revealed through the 1880 U.S. federal census record for Carl (Charles) Joachim Friedrich Düger. It is now known that the FHL has (on microfilm) potentially relevant vital records for this family.
- **Saxony** (Sachsen), where my Riedel and Schreiter ancestors were born, including Karl Wilhelm Schreiter (b. 1813 in Geyer), the focus person for my research for this course. I already have a lot of information for this family, and I met some of my Schreiter cousins in 1973.
- **Schleswig-Holstein**, where some of my husband’s ancestors (surnames Johnson [sic, probably originally a Danish surname, possibly Hansen] and Siwertsen (Siebersen)) were from. The Old World location was revealed in various U.S. federal census and death records. The location was variously recorded as Germany, Prussia, and Denmark.
- **Thuringia** (Türingen), where one of my great-grandmothers (surname Dorsch) was born and lived before her family moved to Saxony

## Maps of Germany

### Overview Map of Germany (Current)



### Historic Map of Germany

The following map shows “Germany” at the time (1873) that my Schreiter ancestors emigrated from Saxony.



## Map of the Erzgebirge Area of Saxony

The following map shows some detail of the area where my Schreiter ancestors lived. My great-grandfather Ehregott August Albin (Alvin) Schreiter (who immigrated to the U.S. in 1873) was born in Geyer. Some of the local records were kept at Annaberg, which is also on the map.

The map is a scan of a postcard I bought when I was in the area in 1973, 100 years after my ancestors left.



Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Same	Schwerin	Sülten
North Rhine-Westphalia	Nordrhein-Westfalen	Düsseldorf	
Rhineland-Palatinate	Rheinland-Pfalz	Mainz	
Saarland	Same	Saarbrücken	
Saxony	Sachsen	Dresden	Geyer, Falkenstein, Marieney
Saxony-Anhalt	Sachsen-Anhalt	Magdeburg	
Schleswig-Holstein	Same	Kiel	Husum
Thuringia	Türingen	Erfurt	Schleiz

## German Gazetteers and Other Geographical and Jurisdictional Resources

### Why Geography and Jurisdiction Are Important in German Research

Gazetteers are of particular significance in doing German genealogical research, because to find most records you must know the location of the event (as well, of course, key information about the person, such as name and at least approximate birth date).

The reason becomes clear if you know that throughout most of German recorded history, what we think of today as “Germany” was many kingdoms, duchies, etc., all of which kept their own records. And the civil organizations weren’t always involved, anyway: until the 19<sup>th</sup> century the churches (mostly Lutheran or Catholic) were the main record-keepers.

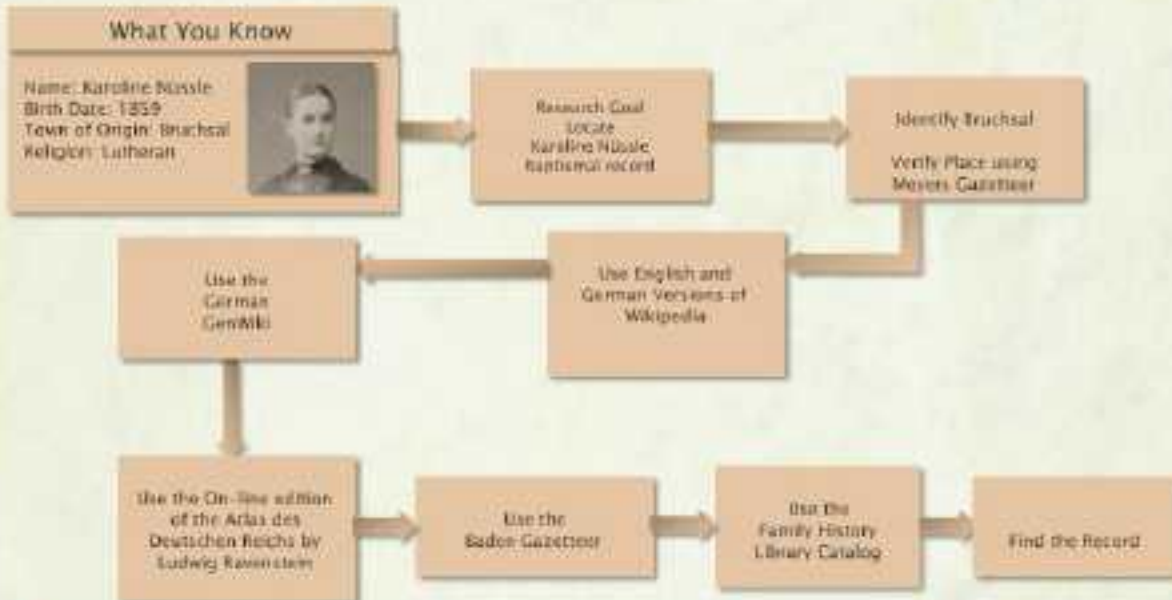
These points are well made by Baerbel Johnson, AG, in a series of excellent presentations available on FamilySearch.org. The process of locating German records, which starts with verification of the existence, name, and exact location of the probable birthplace of the subject, is summarized in the slide below.

For the rest of this section I have included information about some of the key resources I used to follow implement Baerbel’s workflow.

### Baerbel Johnson’s Workflow

The following diagram, copied from a presentation on Familysearch.org, illustrates the general workflow to follow in locating German records. Some of the key documents and websites are listed and described below.

## Strategy-Case Study One



Slide 20 of Germany Beginning Research Series Lesson 3: Using Maps, Gazetteers and Websites, Presenter Bairbel Johnson, Research Consultant, Accessed 29 Jan 2014 on FamilySearch.org

This slide illustrates the workflow to follow to verify your ancestor's placename, identify the jurisdictions for a particular type of record, and find out if the record is available.

### Gazetteers and Other Geographic Resources

Utrecht, E. Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs (*Meyers commercial gazetteer of the German Empire*). Fifth Edition. Leipzig, Germany: Bibliographisches Institute, 1912-3. (FHL book Ref 943 E5mo; films 496,640-1; fiche 6,000,001-29.)

On FamilySearch (not searchable): <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/show?availability=Family%20History%20Library>

On Ancestry (searchable): <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1074>

In Germany, most genealogical records are kept on a town or parish level.

**Gazetteer:**  
 A place name book that describes towns and villages, sizes of population, and jurisdictions.  
 Some also include rivers, mountains, and other geographical features.

Cover Page

Another slide from the Boersel Johnson presentation on FamilySearch.org (copyright 2011 Intellectual Reserve, Inc.) illustrated in the cover of the Meyers gazetteer. Accessed 20 Jan 2014

Geyer (Kr. Leipzig), D. mit Elm., auf der Schwanauer Höhe; Kr. Leipzig, RB. Dorsig, St. W. F. Busig, RB. Neustadt; 681 E.; P, E 1 km; Rbn. Paris-Ströden; Stbl., H. — Dazu Dom. Lannenhof, E 3,2 km, 35 G. (born.)

The following shows the Meyers listing for Geyer, Saxony (birthplace of my great-grandfather).

SpDrl. — Dazu Dr. Nuweiler, P Bouheim,  
 E 3 km Cöln Longerich, 172, Manstedten,  
 E 2,5 km, 92; Gut Stöckheimerhof, P  
 Bouheim, E 2,5 km Cöln Bodlemünd, 24 E.  
**Geyer**, St. (603 m), am Schlegelberg im  
 Erzgeb.; Sa., Krh. Chemnitz, UH. BAdo.  
 Annaberg, UB. Ehrenfriedersdorf; 6451 E.;  
 P, E u. EPs: Schönfeld-Wiesa-Thum, Pw.:  
 Chemnitz-G.-Annaberg u. G.-Aue-Schnee-  
 berg-Neustädtel; GAg., StbU., RZA., 2 ev.  
 Pft.; Fortbild., Beamten-, Posamentierfach-  
 schule; Krankenh., Badanst., Elfr., Wasserw.;  
 Spl.; Kram-, Viehmärkte; Fbr. von Blechw.,  
 Dynamit, Erdfarben, Kartonnagen, Posamen-  
 ten, Posamentenmasch., Spindeln, Strumpf-  
 waren, Waschbrettern, Watte, Zwirn; Brau.,  
 Bleich., Gerb., Sägew., Granitsteinind., Wis-  
 mut-, Schwefel-, Zinn-, Magneteisenbgb. —  
 Dazu Gsth. Greifenthal, Jagdschlößchen;  
 H. Kupferwasserhütte; Gsth. Morgen-  
 sonne; Bwe. Roschervorwerk, E 1,5 km,  
 Schrammvorwerk, Schreitervorwerk;  
 H. Bogelpfeife; Gsth. Waldhaus, E 3 km,  
 Walthers Höhe, E 1,5 km, Zur Winge,  
 E 0,8 km. [digisheim.

Entry for Geyer, Sachsen on page 567 of Meyers Gazetteer. Accessed 24 Jan 2014 on Ancestry.com.

Various resources available on FamilySearch.org and other sites are available to help you with the German script, the meaning of the terms and their English translation.

I have listed a sample of some of the key geographic and jurisdictional resources below.

### Search for Places in Germany

<http://www.genealogy.net> and click on GOV

Example: Search for “Geyer” and select the one that is listed as a “Stadt” (city).

## Modern Place-Names in Germany

Müller, Friedrich. Müllers Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch (Müllers German gazetteer). 12th Edition. Wuppertal-Barmen: Post und Ortsbuchverlag Postmeister A.D. Friedrich Muller, 1958. (FHL book 943 E5m 1958; film 1.045, 448; fiche 6,000,343-54.)

Alphabetical list of place-names before Germany was reunited in 1990.

## Postal Code Book after German Reunification 1993

Das Postleitzahlenbuch (The postal code book). Bonn, Germany: Postdienst, 1993. (FHL book 943 E8p1993.)

## Gazetteers for Saxony

Alphabetical listing of localities and parish addresses in Saxony:

<http://www.genealogienetz.de/reg/SAC/Kirchen/index.html>

Blanckmeister, Die Kirchenbuecher im Koenigreich Sachsen, 1901 [digital copy]:

On: <http://wiki-de.genealogy.net>

## German Timeline

This timeline is not comprehensive, but I have included the events of the past several centuries that are important for Germany as a whole and have significantly impacted (or might have impacted) genealogy and immigration in general and my ancestors in particular.

Date	Event	Notes, Significance
1517	Protestant Reformation	Beginning of the first significant non-Catholic religions in Germany.
1563	Council of Trent	Catholic priests are ordered to start keeping baptism and marriage records.
1583	Catholic areas begin using the Gregorian calendar	
1618-1648	Thirty Years' War	
1648	Peace of Westphalia (end of Thirty Years' War)	Many borders are shifted.
1683	First permanent German settlement in the U.S. at Germantown, PA	
1700	All Protestant areas finally change to the Gregorian	

1709	Palatine emigrants leave Germany for England and America	
1792	France starts civil registration west of the Rhine	Some church records are interrupted.
1772-1795	Prussia annexes West Prussia, Posen and Poland	
1795	Napoleon begins to conquer most of Europe	
1806	Europe reorganized under Napoleonic design	Holy Roman Empire replaced by the Austrian (later Austro-Hungarian) Empire. Prussia is defeated and loses territories conquered over the past 30 years.
1815	Napoleon weakens; Prussia reasserts its power	
1848	German Revolution	Emigration to the U.S. increases.
1850+	Hamburg passenger lists are documented	
1864	Prussia conquers Schleswig-Holstein	
1866	War with Austria	
1871	Franco-Prussian War	Alsace and part of Lorraine come under German rule. German Empire is established as a single nation state.
1874-1876	Civil registration is established and is required throughout Germany	
1914-1918	World War I	After the war ends (1924) immigration is restricted in the U.S., and German immigrants are particularly unwelcome.
1939-1945	World War II	After the war ends East Prussia is divided between Poland and Russia, and many other area of the eastern part of Germany are ceded to Poland.
1945-1990	Cold War	Germany is divided; the eastern portion is controlled by the Soviet Union.

1993	German is again united	The former DDR is reabsorbed. All postal codes are changed.
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