



All I Know? Great Grandpa Came From Germany

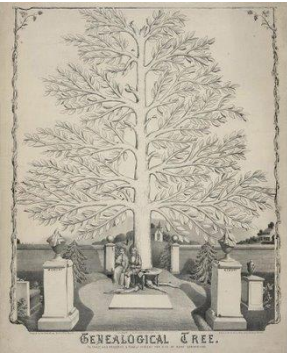


How to research your German ancestors

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Pick an Ancestor – start with what you know and work back.

Ask relatives for information (family bible, photographs-where taken, recollections/family stories). Keep in mind the information may not be correct, but look for CLUES.



Ask yourself, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and WHO with?

"No man is an island" applies to ethnic research.

- Research the neighborhood as well as cemetery and church records.
- Consider spelling variations of your ancestor's surname.
- How did the name sound to a non-speaking German when said.

Records that will provide information about your ancestor:

Death Certificate: (Law creating vital records in Texas passed in 1903) Texas Dept. of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, 1100 W. 49th St., PO Box 12040, Austin, TX 78711-2040, website: www.tdh.state.tx.us/bvs

Helpful websites: www.vitalrec.com (for vital record office for all states)
<http://www.ssdi.rootsweb.com> (SSDI, birth date, death date & county)
<https://familysearch.org> (Texas Death Certificates, State & County records, etc.)

Obituary/Newspapers: (Houston Chronicle, Denominational, German Language)

Look for obits for whole family. May say something like, "Elizabeth came to Texas in 1871 with her Mother, Ernestine Richter, from Leipzig, resident of Travis County since 1875". Newspapers published arrival of ships, passenger lists, ads (immigrant aid societies, churches, letters remaining at Post office. If slow news day, death notice of former resident may be published.

Helpful Websites: www.epodunk.com/search/newspapers.html (to find a newspaper)
www.worldcat.org

Funeral Home Records: Ask how far back their records go?

Request the ledger sheets for the deceased's funeral. Ledger sheets-religious and organizational affiliation, cemetery, surviving relatives, and may contain obituary.

Helpful Websites: www.funeralhomes.com (request ledger sheets for deceased's funeral from f.h.)

Cemetery Records: Does the cemetery have an affiliation with a church, religious denomination, fraternal organization? Check for everyone with same name buried in that cemetery. Look for organization and religious symbols on tombstone which may lead you to sources for information on you ancestor.

Helpful Websites: www.Cyndislist.com/cemetery.htm#Monuments (many links)
www.findagrave.com (very helpful, can add your burial records and photos)
www.usgenweb.com (click on State than county, cemetery, census, and more for county of interest)

Census: Allow for variation of spelling of name, and age. The year of immigration question was asked on the 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930 & 1940 Federal Censuses.

AL on census means "Alien" person has not filed declaration and is not naturalized

PA on census means "Papers" (declaration of intent) has been filed

NA on census means "Naturalized" (declaration and/or naturalization could be filed in any court of record)

"WPA Index to Texas Naturalizations, Texas State District & County Courts 1846-1939" (microfilm-Clayton Library) Alphabetical listing of names within a particular county, description and location of record.

Use date of immigration to search for passenger list. Where your ancestor was and when can determine Port of Entry.



Church Records: Baptism of emigrant's children can provide maiden name of mother, and parents' place of birth in Germany. Use deeds and census enumeration district to look for closest church (reached by buggy/wagon, walking or by horse).

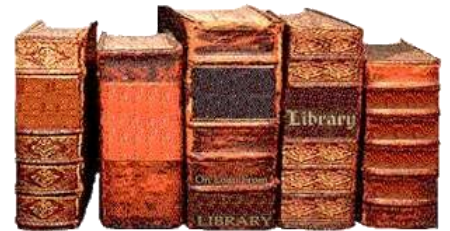
Sources:

County Historical Society, present day church of Ancestor's denomination, Church and University Archives.

Catholic Archives of Texas, P.O. Box 13124, Austin, TX 78711, (512) 476-6296, e-mail: archives@txCatholic.org (on site research by appointment)

Texas Lutheran University <http://www.tlu.edu/library> reference or archivist, 1100 W. Court St., Seguin, TX 78155

Military Records: Many genealogical records generated by military service- Pension – (any war) be sure to get wife's pension as had to say when and where she married. WWI Draft Registration – ask for place of birth, date of birth, if citizen or alien, etc.



Voters Registration Lists 1867-1869: Emigrant had to tell when and where he was naturalized (only citizens could vote).

County Histories: even if your ancestor is not listed, look for the neighbors who were living near him on the various censuses.

Where did they come from? Your ancestor may have been on same ship, with these friends or relatives from back home in Germany.