

April 2024 German Schrift



Welcome to the newest edition of the German Genealogy Quarterly eNewsletter—the German Schrift! This newsletter will highlight the German Special Interest Group (SIG), featured German resources, research tips, and interesting places to visit.

German Research Discussion Group

Review of the January 2024 Meeting:

In the January meeting, we mentioned that the April quarterly session would be dedicated to 'Germans from Russia.' Join us on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. to listen to a presentation by Sharon H., an active member of the local AHSGR chapter. We will have books on display—a constantly revolving collection—detailing the history of German villages on Russian lands, as well as local censuses (known as *die Volkszählung* in German and *Revizskie skazki* in Russian). Additionally, the local chapter of AHSGR may bring their own display. Don't hesitate—come and enjoy your time at Midwest Genealogy Center!

Join us for one of our upcoming German Special Interest Group events:

German Special Interest Group (In-person)
Saturday, April 20 | 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

German Special Interest Group (Zoom)
Sunday, April 21 | 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

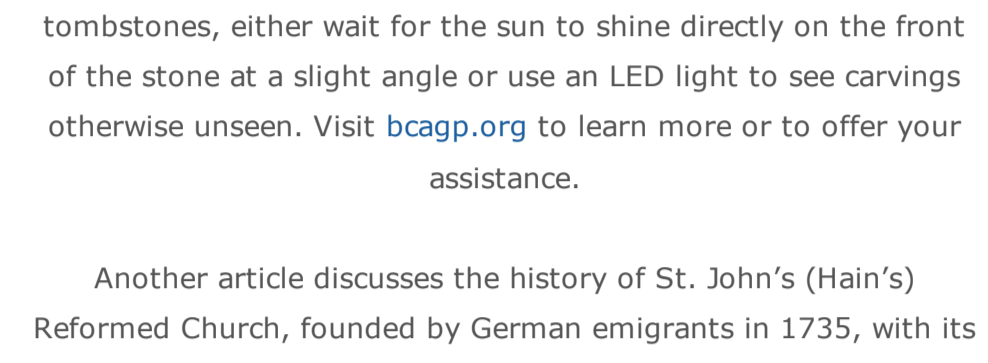
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What's Happening?

Perhaps you attended the Midwest Genealogy Center Spring Seminar with the Genetic Genealogist Blaine Bettinger on March 16, 2024—a full-day event held at the Conference Center at Midwest Genealogy Center. You gained valuable insights into genetic genealogy and are now eager to apply your newly acquired knowledge to your research, aiming to connect with your distant family in Germany and beyond. Now might be the time to consider attending the upcoming virtual presentation on the Fundamentals of Jewish Genealogy. Looking further ahead, consider making plans to attend the Fall Lock-In at the Midwest Genealogy Center. Stay tuned for more details as they become available.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Featured Resources



Midwest Genealogy Center Periodicals

Berks County Genealogical Society Journal, Winter 2023-24

Would you like to be a part of a project dedicated to preserving historic family graveyards in Berks County? The Association for Graveyard Preservation in Berks Co., PA, is seeking volunteers to locate, restore, and preserve many private cemeteries, including repairing tombstones that have been buried for decades or even centuries. You'll discover that the safest method for preserving tombstones and cleaning them from lichen and mold is not flour or chalk, but water and a soft brush or an environmentally friendly agent known as D-2, a method utilized by the NPS to clean historic monuments. Additionally, for reading the inscriptions on tombstones, either wait for the sun to shine directly on the front of the stone at a slight angle or use an LED light to see carvings otherwise unseen. Visit bcagp.org to learn more or to offer your assistance.

Another article discusses the history of St. John's (Hain's) Reformed Church, founded by German emigrants in 1735, with its origin traced to the first settlers of the Tulpehocken region. George and Veronica Hain traveled from Germany to London in 1699, then to Schoharie in 1710, and finally joined over 30 families who settled in the Tulpehocken area in 1723. This church was organized strictly as a German Reformed Church from its inception on four acres of land donated by George and Veronica Hain.

PastPorts

Published by *History & Genealogy at the St. Louis County Library*, Volume 3, Number 1, January 2010. Take a look at the article titled *For the Records: Deciphering Death Notices in German Newspapers*.

This article contains common words found in German death notices, along with a few examples. Additionally, an attached German-English vocabulary provides translations of these common words, presented in Fraktur style (a printed style resembling broken letters), mirroring how they appear in German newspapers. This resource can assist in recognizing these words in printed press.

[PERIODICALS](#)

Featured Books

Witter's Deutsch-Englische Schreib- und Lese-Fibel und Neues Erstes Lesebuch für Amerikanische Freischulen.

Reprint ed. 1987 (original ed. 1881).

Immerse yourself in the German alphabet by exploring the writing of each letter and basic words. This very tiny booklet can be immensely helpful when dealing with old records. "By 1915, twenty-five percent of all American high school students took German. The Laws of Indiana (1907) specified that German be a mandatory subject for high school (p.324). As it happened in other states, the teaching of German came to an abrupt end in 1919." (Excerpt, "About this Reprint Edition", 1987).

This book is reserved exclusively for on-site use at the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Krasnojarsk (Krasnoyarsk), Russia, Birth Records

(Book 1 - 3, 1834 - 1862), by AHSGR, 2021.

Krasnojarsk was among the Volga River German settlements, established in 1767, not far from Saratov. The initial families originated from Darmstadt and various other regions of Germany. These books contain extracts from original records, including surnames, given names, birth and baptism dates, parents' names, and godparents.

This book is reserved exclusively for on-site use at the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Thunder on the Steppe

Volga German Folklife in a Changing Russia

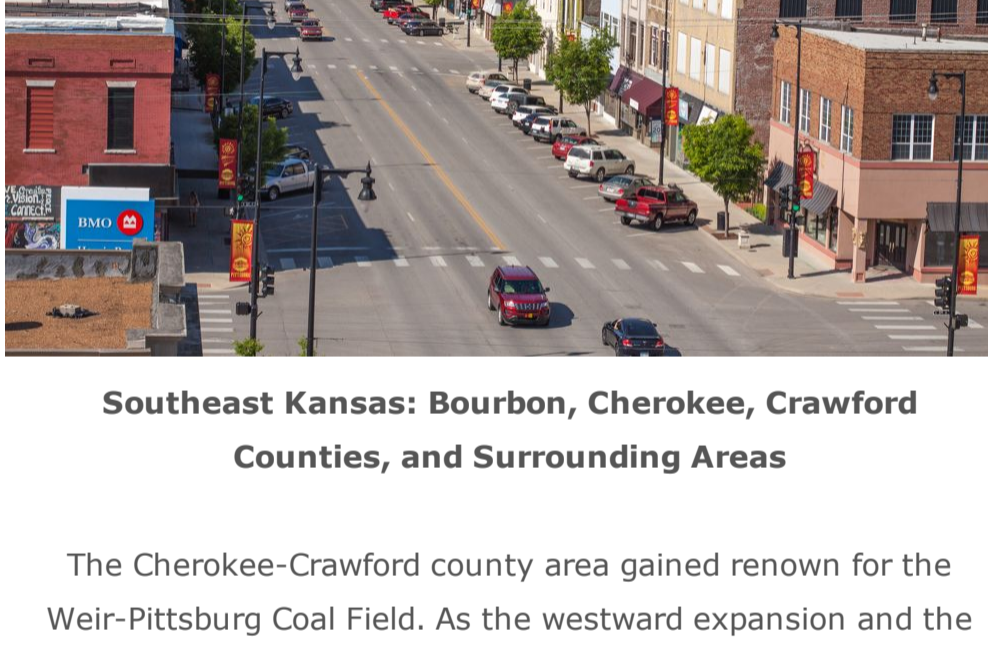
by Timothy J. Klobertanz

Immerse yourself in this captivating narrative, which captures the folklife, traditions, and culture of the Volga Germans. After enduring exile in Siberia and Kazakhstan, they bravely returned to the Volga region "to reclaim a place for themselves and their children in their old homeland" (Citation: Introduction, p.1). Here, the term "folklife" encompasses more than just folklore; it encompasses folk architecture, beliefs, medicine, speech, food, and other aspects of daily life. The book also features poems, recipes, and vibrant German expressions for various situations, including a proverb at the end of this Schrift.

Chapter 11, titled "Feld-Glees: Food as Cultural Symbol," is dedicated to *Kartoffel und Glees* or *Feld-Glees* (Potatoes and Little Dumplings, served with butter and onion). This food evokes memories of my father, who liked it, particularly its variation with a little milk or water left in the pot after cooking dumplings, which he fondly called *Schluchts*.

This book is reserved exclusively for on-site use at the Midwest Genealogy Center.

Research Tips



If you've hit a brick wall in your research, consider backversing course, much like backing up a car and moving back toward the present. Take a closer look at your family records and scrutinize the U.S. Federal Census once more—examine all columns, including occupations, places of residence, and the neighbors who lived nearby.

Navigate around the obstacle by researching the neighbors and the families they interacted with. This alternate path might lead you back to your direct ancestor. If you prefer to stay on a direct path during this second attempt, proceed cautiously and pay attention to all road signs, which may indicate assumptions or potential inaccuracies.

If the surname is very common, it may require additional effort to differentiate between individuals. Conduct thorough research on all related names, moving back and forth until you can identify who is who and who interacted with whom. Then, you can confidently assert which individual is your ancestor.

Here's an online resource tip: consider exploring the [Volga Records website](#). It's a valuable resource that shouldn't be overlooked. Many thanks to Brad for sharing this tip!

Handy Tips for Traveling to Germany

Download a translation app on your phone to avoid getting lost in unfamiliar surroundings where people speak a different language. With numerous apps available nowadays, you can easily orient yourself in such environments.

Here's a valuable tip from Debra: "My most important travel tip is one I learned the hard way. Before booking anything in another country, make sure the credit card you are using does not charge foreign transaction fees. I made that mistake a few years ago and was very surprised when I got the bill."

Do you have another travel tip to share before others embark on their journey to Germany? Let us know at mgs@mml.org or call us at [816-252-7228](tel:816-252-7228) and leave a message for Iveta.

Places to Visit



Southeast Kansas: Bourbon, Cherokee, Crawford Counties, and Surrounding Areas

The Cherokee-Crawford county area gained expansion for the Weir-Pittsburg Coal Field. As the westward expansion and the demand for coal grew, the coal mines in SE Kansas required more workers. Seeking individuals with prior mining experience, companies recruited laborers from Europe. Historical woodcuts depict even women working in mines in Germany as early as the mid-1500s. Agents and companies advertised good pay and a better life in SE Kansas, leading to waves of emigrants from countries including Austria, Germany, Italy, Scotland, Switzerland, Slovenia, and others.

One such emigrant was Johann Christian Ott, born in 1859 in Germany. Although he had studied agriculture at a university in Stuttgart, he found work in the coal mines. Despite his laborious occupation, Ott maintained a home filled with books and enjoyed playing the organ. His life and character later inspired the creation of the bronze statue titled 'Walking Home from the Coal Mine,' which stands as the centerpiece of the Miners' Memorial in downtown Pittsburg, KS. For further insights, readers can explore "Coal Mining Days" by Debby O. Close (2009) or visit Pittsburg, KS.

While many immigrants hailed from Southern Europe, the region was dubbed the Little Balkan, German surnames are still prevalent on the Miner's Memorial. The German community supported German newspapers and established their own church, leaving a lasting cultural imprint.

Franz Rudolph Herman Bachmann, born in Gottschimmerbruch, Friederberg, Brandenburg, Germany (now Gościmiec in Poland), arrived in the area with only ten dollars but went on to establish a thriving confectionery business. Bachmann's unique candy recipes gained widespread acclaim in eastern Kansas and western Missouri, while he also emerged as a respected civic leader in Pittsburg.

A stop at *Chicken Mary's* is a must for visitors to Pittsburg. Established by German immigrants, this restaurant, renowned for its chicken dishes, has earned accolades such as 8 Wonders of Kansas Cuisine and recognition from the Travel Channel's Food Wars.



St. Petersburg, Russia

If exploring closer to home feels too familiar, let's venture to Europe. As the April session is dedicated to Germans from Russia, did you know that many duplicate German church records of births, marriages, and deaths are housed in St. Petersburg? Even churches from as far as Bessarabia sent duplicates of their records to the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), one of the largest archives globally, alongside the National Library of Russia. While some records may be lost, it's worth checking to see what has survived. Ensure you know the year and parish you're researching. Partially indexed records are available on [FamilySearch.org](#).

While exploring St. Petersburg online, don't miss the Winter Palace with the Hermitage Museum, associated with Russian Empress Catherine the Great, who invited Germans to settle in Russia from 1760 to the 1880s. Another noteworthy site is the Lutheran Church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, one of Russia's oldest and largest churches. It may still be referred to as the German church. Explore their website and services, available in German and Russian, at PetrKirche.ru. Additionally, visit the [St. Petersburg Info website](#) and click on "Sehenswürdigkeiten" (Points of Interest, Sightseeing) for more insights.

As an additional note, in our previous newsletter (Jan 2024), we featured Bamberg, Germany, renowned for its unique City Hall built on a bridge. You can read the [January 2024 newsletter here](#). After sharing the newsletter with our subscribers, one of our readers provided beautiful photos from their visit to Bamberg, showcasing the striking buildings adorned with intricate paintings. Photo courtesy of Sharon H. (our April 2024 presenter on Germans from Russia), who visited Bamberg, Germany.

Fun and Learning

Little Pearls from the Books

Here are a few quotes from *The Sunny Side of Genealogy*, compiled by F. D. Baselt in 1986, sourced from various authors:

- "My folks didn't come over on the Mayflower, but they were there to meet the boat." - Will Rogers
- Epitaph*: (author not listed) There are concise inscriptions on one tombstone in a French cemetery. The epitaph is for a husband and wife, his reading: "I am anxiously expecting you." (A. D. 1827), and hers reading: "Here I am!" (A. D. 1827).
- The Puzzled Census-Taker* by John G. Saxe: "Got any boys?" the marshal said - To a lady from over the Rhine, And the lady shook her flaxen head - And civilly answered "Nein."

"Got any girls?" the marshal said - To the lady from over the Rhine; And again, the lady shook her head - And civilly answered, "Nein."

"But some are dead?" the marshal said - To the lady from over the Rhine; And again, she shook her flaxen head - And civilly answered, "Nein"

(The questioning continued...)

"Now, what do you mean by shaking your head - And always answering 'Nein'?"

"Ich kann nicht English," civilly said the lady from over the Rhine.

What is this German word? In the old German record, Dust off that German dictionary from your shelf!

H _ _ t _ n _ _ g
(Hint: February)

L e _ _ m o _ _ t
(March)

O _ t e _ _ m o _ _ t
(April)

H e _ _ m o _ _ t
(July)

H e r _ _ t m _ _ n _ _ t
(September)

C h _ _ s t _ _ n a t
(December)

Proverb:
This time the dialect used from the book *Thunder of the Steppe*.

"Morgen, morgen, nur net heide, sachen [sagen] alle faulen Leide." Which means "Tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, not today, that's what all the lazy ones say." (Book, *Thunder of the Steppe*, p. 106)

Thank you. Danke schön.

PS: I hope you had a chance to taste the Faschingskrapfen or Berliner Pfannkuchen at Easter (we featured them at March 2020 Schrift), and if not, why not do some "research", if your local bakery sells the Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte or other German *lecker* treats.

Iveta B.

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