July 2025 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 Special Interest Group

No July 2025 Sessions

See you in October 2025

Review of the April 2025 Meeting:

As promised, we had two wonderful speakers at our recent session. John, MGC Archivist, gave a fascinating presentation about his experiences living in Germany and visiting various archives. He shared personal stories and accompanied them with photos of the places he visited.

Our second presenter was Paul, a familiar face to many regular attendees. He shared insights into his German ancestry, which traces back to present-day Poland.

If you'd like to hear their presentations again, there may be another opportunity during one of our future virtual sessions—stay tuned!

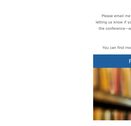
Please note:

The in-person session on Saturday, July 19, 2025 and the virtual session on Sunday, July 20, 2025 will not take place.

However, you're still welcome to come to the MGC building and conduct your own German genealogy research!

Our April SIG meeting was full of interesting discussions, including one about the value of money during the Weimar Republic. As a follow up, I was delighted to find glossy photos in my mailbox from one of you who attended that session! These photos nicely illustrate the drastic inflation of the German Mark in a short period.

For example, in January 1922, a postage stamp to mail a letter cost two marks. By September 1923, that had skyrocketed to 75,000 marks. A chart from December 1923 shows even higher costs. As Kathy noted, some workers were paid more than once a day so they could spend their wages before the money lost even more value.



Take a look at these two framed biblical proverbs—common decorations in German households at the time. Housewives often embroidered these sayings onto canvas or other fabric. When framed, they were hung on walls as decorative pieces. If left unframed, they might be used as dishtowels, typically hung over the sink or elsewhere in the kitchen.

Thank you to Kathy and Bob for sharing these great treasures!

Until our October 2025 session, feel free to give us a call at 816-252-7228 or write an email to mgc@mymail.org . You can also leave a message for Irete with any of your German and Germanic genealogy needs.

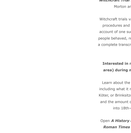
What's Happening?

The IGGP Germanic Genealogy Conference in Columbus, OH, is still fresh in the minds of many German genealogy researchers. If you were one of the attendees at the June 12-15, 2025, conference, we'd love to hear from you!

Please email me at **mgc@mymail.org** with a note for Irete, letting us know if you might be interested in giving a brief review of the conference—what you liked, what the sessions or events you enjoyed most, etc.

You can find more information on the **conference website**.

Featured Resources



Midwest Genealogy Center Archives
(Provided by John, MGC Archivist)

Maki Family Collection

This collection documents the family history of the Maki, Brisew, and Zabel families, and includes letters, postcards, photographs, and other items. While most of the materials are in English, there are a few written in German—including this letter by Minnie Brisew—and several items in Finnish as well.

(Note: Did you spot the needle?)

MGC ARCHIVES

Midwest Genealogy Center Periodicals

Chicago Genealogist, Winter 2025, Vol 57, No. 2, Chicago Genealogical Society.

Kraft's and Spitzenberger's Journeys from Germany to Chicago, by D. Smith with S. A. Smith.

Visit MGC to explore the journey of the authors' ancestors from villages in the Kingdom of Wurttemberg to Chicago. The research is thoroughly documented with cited sources and photographs.

PERIODICALS

Featured Books

Curious about witchcraft trials in Brunswick, Germany?

Check out ***The Trial of Tempel Annebo: Records of a Witchcraft Trial in Brunswick, Germany, 1664***, edited by F. A. Morton and translated by Barbara Dibrino (2004).

Witchcraft trials varied across Germany due to differences in legal procedures and regional laws. This book offers a rare, detailed account of one such trial—taking you back in time to observe how people believed, reacted, and participated in the court process. It's a complete transcription and translation of the trial, from beginning to final verdict.

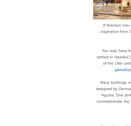
Interested in rural life in Northern Germany (Brunswick area) during medieval times through the 19th century?

Learn about the daily life, land divisions, and social structure—including what it meant to be a *Hübner*, *Halbhübner*, *Kerbenhüter*, *Köter*, or *Brinksitzer*. These terms reflected a person's social status and the amount of land they worked. You'll also discover insights into 18th-century military service and much more.

Open ***A History of Brunswick: Life in a German Duchy from Roman Times through 1900*** by Dan C. Hennemer (1995).

This book also includes a chapter on Tempel Annebo, mentioned above. Even if your ancestors didn't come from Brunswick specifically, it offers a vivid picture of life in Northern Germany during those centuries.

Research Tips



Online Resource Tip:

German Ancestors in Italy
(Tip provided by my colleague Sheri V.)

Researching German ancestors in Northern Italy requires using both Italian and German genealogical resources. Italian records can help you trace migration and settlement, while German records can guide you back to their origins in German-speaking regions.

Steps to Get Started:

Identify the Region in Northern Italy
Determine the province or town where your ancestors lived or settled. Common areas with German-speaking communities include regions such as Trentino-Alto Adige, Friuli Venezia Giulia, and the Italian Swiss border.

Understand German Ethnicity in the Region
Learn about the specific German-speaking communities in Northern Italy and their historical context. Explore their unique customs and traditions. Keep in mind that the German dialects spoken in this region may differ from Standard German.

Use Italian Genealogical Resources
Helpful platforms include FamilySearch, Ancestry, and Portale Antenati.

Trace German Ancestry in Germany
Use German resources such as Archion and Matricula to research records from their place of origin.

Did your German ancestor—or their extended family—live in a major German city in 1900 or 1921?

Visit the Adressbuch collection at www.adressbuch.de—that period. Look for street listings and see whether your ancestors may have moved to a city for work, or perhaps decided to stay in Germany instead of emigrating—especially in key port cities like Hamburg. You might find your family's name listed in directories such as the *Telefonbuch* or *Fernsprechbuch*.

Here is some practice for you. Recognize the name of your ancestor written in various German texts. Type their names into the small search box and see it in the German cursive style.

Handy Tips for Traveling to Germany

This tip comes from Cindel, an avid traveler who recently returned from another transatlantic trip—this time exploring Turkey and Istanbul.

Her tip: Don't overtip in Europe.
While we've shared this advice in a previous Schrift, it's always helpful to hear it confirmed by another seasoned traveler.

Places to Visit

Branson, Missouri

A few weeks ago, I visited Branson, MO, and one of my stops was the Fishing Museum. With a very knowledgeable guide leading the way, we thoroughly enjoyed the tour.

Right at the start of his introduction, the guide pointed to a wall on our right in the entry area—and my curiosity was instantly piqued. He began talking about George W. Snyder, an avid fisherman from Kansas City who, in the early 1900s, established a fishing resort here in Ferris, MO. Snyder is credited with inventing the multiplying reel—commonly known as the Kentucky reel—at the beginning of the 19th century. In addition to his contributions to fishing, Snyder was also a talented watchmaker and silversmith.

If Branson hits a little too close to home, why not take some inspiration from Cindel's latest adventure and explore Istanbul, Turkey?

You may have heard of the so-called Bosporus Germans, who settled in Istanbul (formerly Constantinople) during the second half of the 19th century. Or explore further on Germany's largest genealogy website (you can switch to English):

Many buildings in Istanbul reflect this German presence—either designed by German architects or commemorating visits by German figures. One striking example is the German Fountain, built to commemorate the second anniversary of German Emperor Wilhelm II's visit to Istanbul in 1898.

For a deeper dive into historical Constantinople, check out this beautifully illustrated German book available through the Internet Archive. Alt-Konstantinopel: Nordenmann-Perapoulos Aufnahmen der Stadt und ihrer Bau- und Kunst-Denkmäler by Ernst Diez and Heinrich Glück.

Fun and Learning

Little Pearls from the Books (or Periodicals)

Orphan Trains to Missouri, by Michael D. Patrick and Evelyn Goodrich Trickel, 1997.

"By 1850 the German area of New York City, just north of the Irish district, was called "Kleindeutschland" (Little Germany). It extended from the Bowery to the tenth, eleventh, and thirteenth wards. Kleindeutschland was famous for its beer gardens, its excellent, food cuisines, and drinking habits. A comic song, "Sturkraut and Sausages" was sung by a Mr. G. Barry at the Bowery Theatre to "Knuckles of applause." The songwriter imitated a German accent, and the chorus named some favorite German foods and drink: "Sturkraut un Sausages / Schnaps un lager beer". (Page 5, see also paragraphs related to Irish and Italian immigrants before and after...).

What is the German word? Dust off that German dictionary from your shelf! This time, a few old words used in the trial in Brunswick (and more). Consider the German English Genealogical Dictionary by G. Throne and others in the MGC Catalog.

H _ _ r _
Witchcraft

Z _ u b _ r _
Sorcerer

R e _ _ e n
Rye

N _ u e _ _ e r
New inhabitant

ü b _ r _ _ _ b
Above

A u ß _ r _ t e i n d e r _ e
Out of wedlock

A u ß _ r _ h _ ch
Out of wedlock

K o _ _ t r _ t
Shelter (title)

Proverb:
"Guter Freund kommt ungerufen." Autor unbekannt. Author unknown.

Good friend comes uninvited. A good friend can also come without an invitation and is always welcome.

Thank you. Danke schön.

Irete S.

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