April 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

Review of the January 2025 Meeting:

Mike B. presented his genealogy journey on both Saturday and Sunday, sharing his techniques and correspondence with professional genealogists in Germany. His presentation was truly inspiring, and several attendees even asked if he could provide an outline or handout of his research. Well done, Mike!

To my surprise, I found myself smiling at one point during his presentation when I saw my own face on the screen—Mike had included a photo of us together from our first meeting at the Davis Festival in Sugar Creek, MO, on June 7, 2024.

Next Meeting – April 19, 2025, at 2:00 PM (Two Presenters)

Our main presenter will be John M., MGC Archivist. Some of you may already be familiar with him from our Holiday Edition on December 6, 2024. John has experience conducting historical research at German archives and libraries, and we're eager to hear his tips for German archival research!

Additionally, Paul H. will take us on a journey through his Danube Swabian research. The Germans who settled in Hrpovina, Serbia, were known as Basel Swabians or *Donau Schwaben*. Paul previously presented it to us in 2023. Now, he is revisiting his ancestry journey, which even led him to Bohemia (now the Czech Republic) and its German records.

German Special Interest Group (In-Person)
Saturday, April 19 | 2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

LEARN MORE

What's Happening?

John, MGC Archivist, was previously scheduled to present on both Saturday and Sunday in April 2025. However, since Sunday, April 20, falls on Easter Sunday, please note that John will now present only on **Saturday, April 19, 2025, as an in-person session.**

His virtual presentation, intended for our online audience, is tentatively scheduled for **Sunday, July 20, 2025**, alongside Paul's presentation. Stay tuned for updates in the **July 2025 Schrift**.

Upcoming Conferences:

International German Genealogy Partnership Conference
Columbus, Ohio | June 12–15, 2025

German Genealogy Day
Frankfurt am Main, Germany | September 26–28, 2025

Featured Resources

Midwest Genealogy Center Archives

MGC Archivist John M. shared this beautiful image—one of the many treasures in the MGC Archives.

Don't forget—John will also be our presenter on **April 19, 2025**!

Wulfekammer Family Papers

This archival collection documents the Wulfekammer family from the 19th century Missouri. It includes several German-language records from **Lafayette County and Saint Louis, Missouri**, such as marriage certificates, confirmation certificates, and a small journal, all dating back to the 1800s.

The certificates are beautifully illustrated and printed in German, like the one pictured here, while the journal is written in *Kurrentschrift*, an archaic form of German cursive handwriting.

MGC ARCHIVES

Midwest Genealogy Center Periodicals

Mennonite Family History, Jan 2025, Vol 44, No 1

The articles in this periodical series consistently demonstrate that Mennonite families originated in Switzerland before migrating to Alsace, France, and the Palatinate (Pfalz) region of Germany. Some later traveled to the Russian Empire, though many eventually settled in America. As revealed in numerous family articles, their decisions to leave their homeland were primarily driven by religious persecution.

In the article Lessons from the Prince: A Contemplation of the Engravings of Jan Luyken by Anita Baughman, we learn that this year marks the 500th anniversary of the first adult Anabaptist baptism in Switzerland.

Visit MGC, relax in the armchair, and explore the latest issues on the first floor. Older issues are bound by year and shelved upstairs in the Northeast Hall.

PERIODICALS

Featured Books

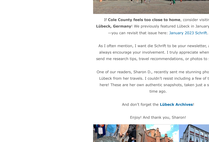
Familienbuch Bethlehim 1480-1825, by Elke Pies

We've just received another batch of **OFB/OSB German Village Lineage Books**! A standout among them is *The Familienbuch Bethlehim, 1480–1825*, published in 2024 by **Cordavinia Verlag Publishing House**.

Bethlehim is located in **Rhineland-Palatinate, in the Rhein-Hunsrück district**. If your ancestry traces back to this region, visit **MGC** or give us a call—we'd love to help with your research!

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

Research Tips



Online Resource Tip:

Check out the latest **village lineage books** online—you might find records from your ancestral town or village! **Explore here.**

If a newborn child's first name is missing in the baptismal record—the column that should list it is blank—then look to the right under the Godparents column. In those cases, the child would receive the name after a godparent.

If a girl was born, she would be named after her godmother. If the godmother's first name was, for example, Theresia, the child's name would be Theresia, as well.

If a boy was born, he would be named after his godfather. If the godfather's first name was Peter - the child's first name would be Peter. This custom worked almost as an unwritten rule.

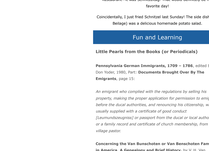
Definitely, read carefully the whole baptismal record and all columns, and if the child's first name is not listed, check the column titled Paten, Taufpaten, or Taufzeuge (meaning the Godparents) to find the child's first name.

Handy Tips for Traveling to Germany

Be prepared to pay in Germany using both card and cash. It's especially helpful to keep small bills and coins on hand for various small services. While contactless payment is widely accepted, some places may still prefer cash.

When dining out, tipping 5%–10% is considered polite. In many cases, simply rounding up to the nearest euro is common and sufficient. Tipping is not mandatory.

Places to Visit



Cole County, Missouri

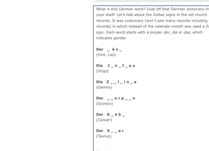
Cemeteries are **solemn, quiet places** that remind us to honor and remember those who came before us. **Cole County, MO**, is home to many small cemeteries that serve as the final resting places for individuals of **German heritage**.

A loyal **MGC customer, Susan**, shared a valuable tip about **German gravestones** she has personally observed, both in person and online. One example is the **Eberhardt Cemetery**, a tiny burial site with German inscriptions. The **Eberhardt family** originally came from **Switzerland**. You can explore it here: Eberhardt Cemetery.

*(Note: Susan attended the **Coffee and Conversation** event in January 2025, where I discussed the origins and evolution of German last names. Her family name is also common for me. So both shared one, Susan!)*

For a **list of cemeteries in Cole County, MO**, visit:
Cole County Genealogy Website

Although no longer updated, this older resource may still be useful:
Rootsweb Cemetery List



// **Cole County feels too close to home**, consider visiting **Lübeck, Germany**! We previously featured Lübeck in January 2023 - you can revisit that issue here: January 2023 Schrift.

As I often mention, I want *die Schrift* to be your newsletter, and I always encourage your involvement. I truly appreciate when you send me research tips, travel recommendations, or photos to share.

One of our readers, Sharon D., recently sent me stunning photos of Lübeck from her travels. I couldn't resist including a few of them here! These are her own authentic snapshots, taken just a short time ago.

And don't forget the **Lübeck Archives**!

Enjoy! And thank you, Sharon!

Map of the old town | **Church Walls** | **Niederegger, Marzipan store**

Take a look at the Natural Menu of the Day at Ratskeller Restaurant—it was Schnitzel Day! That would definitely be my favorite day!

Coincidentally, I just had Schnitzel last Sunday! The side dish (die Beilage) was a delicious homemade potato salad.

Fun and Learning

Little Pearls from the Books (or Periodicals)

Pennsylvania German Immigrants, 1709 – 1786, edited by Don Yoder, 1985, Part: **Documents Brought Over By The Emigrants**, page 15:

An emigrant who complied with the regulations by selling his property, making the proper application for permission to emigrate before the local authorities, and renouncing his citizenship, was usually supplied with a certificate of good conduct (Abzugszeugnis) or passport from the local or local authorities, or a family record and certificate of church membership, from the village pastor.

Concerning the Van Bunschoten or Van Benschoten Family in America A Genealogy and Brief History, by H. Van Benschoten, 1985, 2nd ed.

If you're curious about the makeup of the **Hollander populace**, this excerpt citing **G. Bancroft** may offer one perspective.

G. Bancroft, History of the United States of America, From the Discovery of the American Continent (16 volumes).

This book was introduced to me by my colleague **Jennifer**, whose ancestry is discussed in its pages.

"The emigrants from Holland were themselves of the most various lineage. Could we trace the descent of the emigrants from the Low Countries to New Netherlands we should be carried not only to the banks of the Rhine and the borders of the German Sea, but to the Protestants who escape from France after the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve, and to those earlier inquirers who were swayed by the voice of Huss in the heart of Bohemia." Bancroft.

What is this German word? Dust off that German dictionary from your shelf! Let's talk about the Zodiac signs in the old church records. It was customary (and I saw many records) including bible records) in which instead of the calendar month was used a Zodiac sign. Each Zodiac starts with a proper day, *die* or *das*, which indicates gender.

Der _ _ **d e _**
(Virgo) Leo]

Die _ **j u _ f _ u e**
(Virgin)

Die _ **j _ _ l _ r e _ e**
(Gemini)

Der _ _ _ **s c o r p _ _ n**
(Scorpio)

Der _ **s _ c k b _**
(Cancer)

Der _ **s _ _ _ e r**
(Taurus)

Proverb:
"Wenn der Reiter nichts taugt, hat das Pferd Schuld."

(If the horse rider is not very skillful, he blames his horse.)

Or in more plain terms, "An unskilled worker blames his tools."

This means that if someone isn't good at something, they often try to blame someone or something else instead of admitting that they need to get better at practice more.

Thank you. Danke schön.

Sieta B.