

Ancestral Village
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Now that the ancestral village of your ancestor has been located, how do you find out more information? This lecture explores the next steps in researching in the ancestral homeland and overcoming barriers such as language and an ocean.

To be successful, you need to know basic information such as:

- Surname and all variant spellings
- Country of origin
- Village or town of origin
- Religion
- Keep an open mind



Review the data gathered to date and verify against The Genealogical Proof Standard, published by the Board for Certified Genealogists® to ensure each of the following has been completed:

- a reasonably exhaustive search
- complete and accurate source citations
- analysis and correlation of the collected information
- resolution of any conflicting evidence
- a soundly reasoned, coherently written conclusion

There are lots of resources available for locating ancestral villages. Some obvious ones are:

- Birth, marriage, death certificates
- Naturalization records
- Cemeteries / funeral records / headstones
- Churches (place of destination)
- Family documents or memories
- Immigrants, family, and friends
- Land records
- Obituaries
- Social Security Application (SS-5)
- U.S. Census (from 1900, 1910, or 1920) or Canadian Census
- U.S. port of entry records (ship manifests)
- Wills



Problems that may need resolving:

- Spelling
 - Name of village is misspelled
 - Name of village only spoken, never written
 - Translation into another language
 - Poor penmanship, difficult to read
- Duplicates
 - Same or very similar village names
 - Need to narrow it down

- Former versus current village name
 - Names change over the years
 - Borders change
 - Governments change
 - Impact of wars
 - Language changes
- Where did my village go?
 - Wars, pogroms, and construction cause villages to appear and disappear
 - One village is incorporated into a larger, adjacent municipality
 - Changes to village name prefix or suffixes

Look up the ancestral village on maps:

- Google, Yahoo, any internet mapping website
- Mapquest.com
- Look up in a gazetteer
- Detailed maps



Once the location of the ancestral village has been found, the door to discovery is wide open. The next steps should include:

- Google name of town or village
- Write to the local universities, archives, historical and genealogical societies
- Write to the mayor
- Write to the local churches
- Access current telephone directories
- Write, write, write

When writing, be sure to include:

- Self-addressed, stamped return envelope
- Translation, if possible
- Money to pay for research or the offer of
- All the information you have on your ancestor (include this as a separate document referenced in your letter)



Ask for:

- Any information they may have on your ancestor
- Names of any researchers in the area
- Copies of any town or village anniversary brochures
- Names and addresses of local churches
- Names and addresses of any local residents with the same surname
- Pictures
- Anything else you believe significant to your research and ancestor

Writing for Records:

Civil registration records from many towns and states are available on microfilm or online.

However, many civil registration records, especially those created in 1876 or later, are still only available in the local civil registration office or archive in Germany that has the originals. Civil birth, marriage, and death records may be found by contacting or visiting the local civil registration office or archive.

Sample letters can be found on www.familysearch.org

German Letter Writing Guide

Germany → Letter Writing Guide

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15	EXAMPLE LETTER

When writing to a county where the primarily language is NOT English, there are several options available from no translation to full translation. The following are available resources for translating your information:

- Translations software – not so good
- Person – better
- Local schools or colleges – check for students of your language for assistance. They will probably be glad for the learning opportunity and earning a few dollars.
- Professional researchers – they may be expensive but often worth the cost when compared to travel expenses not to mention obtaining the much coveted ancestor information
- On-line services – May be free or charge a fee
- Translation services – May be free or charge a fee

Currency Converters – There are many currency converters available on the internet. Google has an easy-to-use converter. If you need to send foreign currency, U.S. dollars can be exchanged at some banks and some AAA offices. Be sure to call ahead, and be specific in your requirements.

Standesamt der Stadt (town)
Street Number
D-Zip Town
Germany

Follow instructions for the church letter.

Sehr geehrte Dame, sehr geehrter Herr!

Zur Vervollständigung meiner Familiengeschichte benötige ich nähere amtliche Angaben über die Familie des/der _____ geboren am _____ in _____.

Ich bitte Sie freundlichst um Übersendung eines vollständigen Auszuges aus Ihrem Geburts-/ Heirats-/ Sterberegister zur vorstehend genannten Person.

Sollte es Ihnen möglich sein, mir ebenfalls Auszüge über Geburt, Heirat oder Tod seiner/ihrer Eltern anzufertigen, die im gleichen Orte gewohnt haben sollten, so wäre ich Ihnen für diese Hilfe sehr dankbar.

Zur Deckung Ihrer Gebühren lege ich zehn Mark bei. Sollten Ihnen weitere Auslagen entstehen, so bitte ich Sie, mir dies mitzuteilen.

Für Ihre Hilfe danke ich Ihnen herzlich im voraus.

Hochachtungsvoll,
Your name
Address

*****TRANSLATION*****

Gentlemen:
In order to complete my Family History, I am in need of more precise official data on the family of _____ born _____ in _____ in _____.

I would kindly like to ask you to send me a complete excerpt from your birth-/ marriage-/ death registers for the person mentioned above.

Should you be able to let me have, in addition, the birth-, marriage- or death records of his/her parents who are said to have lived in the same place, I would be most grateful for your assistance in this matter.

To cover your fees, I am enclosing 10 DM. Should you incur additional expenses, please let me know.

Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely yours,
Your name and address

Google 10 USD in GBP

Web Show options...

10 U.S. dollars = 6.27234523 British pounds

Rates provided for information only - see disclaimer. More about currency

Postage – If you are unsure as to the postage requirements, again there are several resources on the internet; among them is the U.S. Postal Service. If in doubt, call or visit one of their offices.

<http://postcalc.usps.gov/>

USPS.COM® Postage Price Calculator

What's the destination country?
Germany





What's the value of the item being mailed?
Item's Value or Leave Empty for Letter Shape Mail
For letter-shaped mail, value must be \$0.00

What's the Date you plan to mail the item?
1/12/2020

What's the Time you plan to mail the item?
between 10:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

What are you Mailing?
 Only Nonnegotiable Document(s)

Please select from the following options

 Calculate Postcard price	 View Flat Rate Envelopes	 View Flat Rate Boxes	 Calculate price based on Shape and Size
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What you may get back:

- Nothing!
- Form letter
- Names and addresses
- Referrals
- Brochures, books
- Pictures
- Website links
- Complete family registries
- Maps



On-line resources

<http://www.worldgenweb.org/>
www.irelandgenweb.com
www.familysearch.org
www.irishgenealogy.ie
www.nli.ie
www.irishorigins.com
ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm
www.arkivalieronline.dk/

www.cyndislist.com/germany.htm
<http://map.geohive.ie>
http://ddd.dda.dk/ddd_en.htm
<https://www.sa.dk/en/>
http://www.rhd.uit.no/folketellinger/folketellinger_e.aspx
<https://forebears.io/wales>