

Der Ahnenforscher

"The Family Researcher"

Issue 151

April 2011



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April Showers

Several German words have wended their way into common usage in the United States since colonial times, including kindergarten, gesundheit, zeitgeist, angst, lederhosen and bratwurst. Others have emerged more recently, such as *Fahrvergnügen*, popularized among young hipsters of the era in a series of North American TV ads for Volkswagen automobiles in the mid-1990's. Still others have attained a kind of gold standard of eternal coolness, even if they are not commonly used in English, such as *Autobahn*.

Julianne Moore, playing to startling effect a glorious caricature of a postfeminist artist with a highly affected private schoolgirl accent in the Coen Brothers' cult classic *The Big Lebowski*, shows Jeff Bridges a record put out by a German band in the 1970's. She points out that this fictional band, an obvious allusion to the critically acclaimed German electro-pop wunderkinds Kraftwerk, only completed this one single record, which they dubbed "Autobahn."

The German Autobahn (highway) is shrouded in legend, particularly for people who like to experience Fahrvergnügen (driving pleasure).

"Germany, isn't that the country where the Autobahn is?" is one of the primary questions Germans traveling abroad are still asked today, especially by people who would like to get behind the wheel of a German-engineered car and put the pedal to the metal on a well-groomed stretch of the Autobahn lacking speed limits (such limits do actually exist in Germany, but vary greatly as elsewhere from city streets to highways).

Following the North American International Auto Show held in Detroit from January 10 to 11, German car manufacturers are looking forward to predictions of robust sales in the near future. German luxury carmakers - including Mercedes-Benz, Audi, BMW, and Porsche - attended the Detroit Auto Show with a view to making major inroads into the United States, which at present remains their largest foreign market. (The China-Asia market is catching up in purchasing Mercedes-Benz models and other German luxury brands.)

As reported by Deutsche Welle, Matthias Wissmann, president of Germany's national car industry association, says 2011 could be a record-setting year for sales of German cars in the US, with an 11 percent increase being forecast.

"Almost every American who is interested in cars wants a Porsche, Audi, Mercedes, or BMW. And more and more, they are actually buying these more expensive cars. The demand for German cars in the USA remains unprecedented worldwide," he said. German carmakers, including Porsche - absent for the past four years at the Detroit Motor Show - were all waxing optimistic.

"We know from our surveys that Americans love 'German engineering' and precision, and comfort, and we took that into account with our new Passat. And we are convinced that this will lead to more Americans buying Volkswagen," Volkswagen CEO Martin Winterkorn told Deutsche Welle. Economists blame a state-supported cash-for-clunkers scheme for a dip in German car sales in 2010, and paint a far rosier picture for the industry in 2011 and 2012.

America's ongoing love affair with German-made cars is, of course, already steeped in modern history, with the Volkswagen Beetle coming to define an entire generation in the 1960's, and other models from Mercedes, BMW, Porsche and Audi symbolizing success, style, safety, luxury and glamour.

Janis Joplin knew what she wanted when she crooned "Oh Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz?"

To drive a German car on the Autobahn and experience real *Fahrvergnügen* is truly a splendid experience for people from all walks of life.

Source: *The Week in Germany* ~ January 14, 2011

German Genealogy Group, Inc.

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The German Genealogy Group (GGG) is a not-for-profit organization that was established to provide mutual support among those interested in researching their Germanic ancestors. We meet on the first Thursday of each month (September—June) at the Hicksville VFW, 320 South Broadway (Route 107), Hicksville, NY at 7:30 PM.

All members are encouraged to submit articles, hints, suggestions, etc. for publication. We reserve the right to edit submissions. Material may be mailed or e-mailed to:

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While we strive for accuracy, the German Genealogy Group assumes no responsibility for typos, errors of fact or opinions expressed or implied by contributors. Errors brought to our attention will be corrected.

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www.GermanGenealogyGroup.com

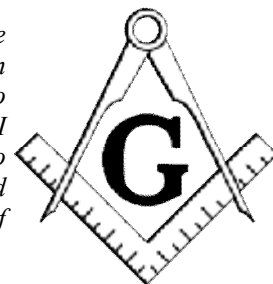
or

www.TheGGG.org

Researching Ancestors Who Were Freemasons

Here's how to track down records of ancestors who were Free and Accepted Masons.

Q. My grandfather was well-known among the Masons—in fact, one of the Masonic lodges in North Carolina is named for him. I've been trying to find information from while he was in the Masons. I can get to some web sites, but can't find a way to contact anyone. I've done all sorts of searches and come up with nothing. Do you have any ideas of where else I can search?



A. Members of Masonic lodges are known as “accepted” Masons, or officially, Free and Accepted Masons. Freemasonry generally has three major “degrees”: entered apprentice, fellow of the craft and master mason.

Freemasonry also encompasses various “rites”—for example, the York Rite includes the Royal Arch Masons and the Cryptic Masons (advanced degrees of Freemasonry).

A man could petition a lodge for membership after he turned 21, but most didn't until their 30s. (See a list of Masonic abbreviations that may be clues to when a relative was a member.) <http://www.bessel.org/abbrevs.htm>

Knowing how Freemasonry is organized will help your search: Each Masonic lodge belongs to a Grand Lodge; there's a Grand Lodge in every US state. The Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of North Carolina has a website (see its Archives page for historical information). <http://www.grandlodge-nc.org/>

Most lodge records don't go back as far as Freemasonry's 18th-century origins. Many have been lost to fire—for instance, all of the California Grand Lodge's records burned after the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, and the Arkansas lodge's records burned in 1918. If you discover the records no longer exist, check local libraries for published histories of the lodge.

If your grandfather's lodge still has records from his lifetime, you may be able to get his application and other records about his involvement. Keep in mind that prior to 1900, applications asked only for the name and age of the applicant, along with three references.

If you know the local lodge your grandfather belonged to, contact it first. Search for it online, or look in the yellow pages under Fraternal Orders (North Carolina lodges are listed on the Grand Lodge's website, with a separate page of links to websites for some). Supply your grandfather's full name and his membership dates.

<http://www.grandlodge-nc.org/Archive/alfalodges.htm>

If you can't find information on the local lodge or don't know which one he belonged to, contact the Grand Lodge (the North Carolina lodge lists staff contact information on its website). Provide your grandfather's town and county of residence, the dates he lived there, and when you believe he became a Mason. Grand Lodges receive many requests from genealogists, which means you might have to pay for record searches and wait a long time to receive a reply.

Source: Genealogy Insider

From the Heart

Thoughts from Jo Ann Schmidt



Our relatives immigrated to the shores of these United States to find a better life and escape whatever conditions they were unhappy about in Germany, or another foreign land. Many of these immigrants had plans to work, as they did in the Vaterland, as farmers. Of course, this involved buying their own land, since the notion of working for someone else was not what motivated their trek to America. They took their life's savings and made for a new beginning. Much of their funds were spent on the voyage. Once on the shores of the new country, if they were healthy enough and financially set, many of these traveling immigrants headed directly to rural areas and attempted to fulfill their dreams. But others remained in the cities, such as New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and then had to find a means of supporting themselves and their families.

As a child growing up in Brooklyn, I can recall my mother commenting when I came into our apartment after a hard day of play in the concrete backyard, that I looked like a little rag picker. I never really had an understanding of the meaning of that term, except that I was dirty, my pants had a ripped knee, just the usual! What did that have to do with rags? As I researched more and more about the stresses our ancestors endured, I came across the term used so long ago by my mother to describe my post-playtime appearance. So what did this term really mean?

Many of the Germans who immigrated and stayed in the urban areas still held on to their dream of owning their own land and farming for a living. To accomplish this, they needed to earn money to travel and purchase the land, and then set up a farm. The western part of the United States was considered the Promised Land, and so as the immigrants lived in crowded city tenements, all family members needed to contribute to the funds needed to get to this perceived paradise. Even for those who did not wish to move out of the bigger cities, money was always a necessity to maintain and ultimately improve their economic status, and therefore their way of living. To accomplish the goal of financial well being, many immigrants took to rag picking.

According to historical records, a great number of German rag pickers lived in New York City as early as 1842. They were described as country Germans with a frugal habit of saving and using all of the materials they could find, and, interesting to note, there was no garbage collection in city areas in the mid 1800's. With this in mind, these immigrant rag pickers were actually providing a service to the cities in which they picked. It is equally important to note that immigrants of many nationalities took up this occupation, which could prove to be quite lucrative.

As I researched more and more about this unimpressive immigrant occupation, I was surprised to learn that the collections were not limited to rags. There were bones to be boiled, metal, leather, glass, and paper to be foraged through. In an article in the New York Times in January 1853, it was stated that thousands of German rag pickers were living in the 11th and 17th Wards of Manhattan.

The rag pickers would have baskets or carts in which to pile their accumulation as they traveled the streets during the day. They kept large numbers of dogs to pull the carts throughout the town. The pickers carried poles or hooks, tools of their trade, which enabled them to sort through the piles of debris for the "perfect" treasures.

When the pickers returned home, the family had the job of dealing with the contents of the baskets or carts. The "stuff" had to be sorted and then cleaned. The garbage from kitchens and butcher shops was boiled. The meat that may have been left on the bones was removed from the boiled water and used as a meal for the family. The rags also had to be cleaned and dried, which lead to an accumulation of linen and cotton fabric hanging to dry wherever there was an opportunity to do so (clothes lines, handrails, etc.) The linen was sold to make paper. If there were bits of wool, after they were cleaned they were sold to be used in rug making. The bare bones were also sold. They were used to make things such as toothbrushes, combs, handles, and don't forget about bone china!

And so, when we all consider our own beginnings from immigrants seeking a better way of life, we need to paint the picture appropriately. There were no galvanized cans on the streets awaiting scheduled garbage pickups. The whole notion of recycling was actually started by these rag pickers, who served a wonderful role in keeping the environment cleaner. When we are antiquing and spot a lovely dresser set from the Victorian era, we now will look at the comb and brush handle and ponder from whence they came.

It most likely is not documented in your family histories that Aunt Hilda was a rag picker, but the possibility is definitely there. Uncle Otto may have been the one churning the pot of boiling bones, while Cousin Carl was out cleaning the carts and playing with the dogs....it's a new way to think of your family's hidden life all those years ago!

And my mother was definitely wrong...I was not a rag picker, just a kid growing up on the concrete stoop in Brooklyn!





2011 GGG Spring Dinner

Thursday April 28th - 7:00PM

The Bonwit Inn
 One Motor Parkway, Commack, NY 11725
 (631) 499-2068 www.TheBonwitInn.com

The Bonwit's "Famous" Greek Salad ~ Penne ala Vodka
 Choice of: Sauerbraten, Boscaiola, Pork Chop, Grilled Salmon
 Dessert: Chocolate or Cannoli Cake, Coffee & Tea

Alcoholic beverages are cash & carry

All Inclusive Cost is \$31.00 Per Person

NAME _____

NAME _____

TELEPHONE (____) _____ E MAIL _____

of reservations @ \$31 each _____ Please name who you want to sit with _____

Reserve by April 20th. A \$2.00 fee will be charged for cancellations after that date.

Please make check payable to the GGG and mail to:

GGG ~ c/o Nancy Dow ~ P.O. Box 94 ~ West Islip, NY 11795

Questions? E-mail: nanover@optonline.net ~ 631 - 587 - 9785

Additions to the Surname List

Below are revised or new additions to the Surname List which now includes 2,920 surname entries. Login to the website www.GermanGenealogyGroup.com to make contact with the submitters.

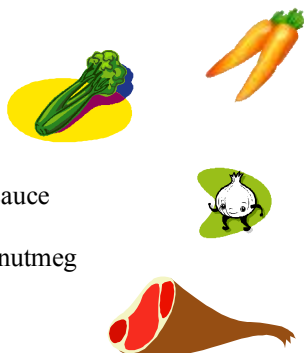
Adler	Giegerich	Knörnschild	Schottenhamel
Arbogast	Gluth	Koch	Schottenhammel
Bahns	Goetz	Koskowski	Schricker
Bauer	Gonset	Kuntz	Seiss/Seiß
Bier	Greiss/Greiß	Langheinrich/Longhenry	Sieffen
Boehm	Happ	Laschinger	Silbereißen
Brendel	Haußer/Hausser	Maeske	Trefz
Burkhardt	Hehl	Marth	Tröger
Cross	Heinsius/Heinsiuß	Meyer	Trout
DeNigris	Heldt	Meyer	Umbach
Dick	Hesler	Müller/Miller	Vogel
Doser	Heyd/Heid/Heÿdt	Oechsner	Walliser
Ebert	Hillebrand	Oppertshauser	Wild
Engelberg	Hohl	Pohls	Zembruski
Ernst	Hülßenbeck	Quirin	Zimmerer
Filhart/Villhard	Humbert	Rodenbach	
Fischer	Jack/Jaggi/Taggi	Sack	
Fleck	Jacobs	Schlosser	
Frank	Jaeger	Schmidt	
Gerhards	Klein	Schneider	

Guten Appetit!

German Lentil Soup

Ingredients

- 2 cups dried brown lentils, rinsed and drained
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup cooked, cubed ham
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 5 drops hot pepper sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon caraway seed
- 1/2 teaspoon celery salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper



Directions

- Place lentils in a 5 to 6 quart slow cooker.
- Add chicken stock, bay leaf, carrots, celery, onion, and ham.
- Season with Worcestershire sauce, garlic powder, nutmeg, hot pepper sauce, caraway seed, celery salt, parsley, and pepper.
- Cover, and cook on Low for 8 to 10 hours.
- Remove bay leaf before serving.

Stovetop method

- Place lentils in a stock pot with chicken stock, bay leaf, ham, and seasonings.
- Bring to a boil, then simmer over medium heat for 30 minutes.
- Stir in carrots, celery, and onion, and cook until tender, about 15 minutes.
- Add additional water if necessary to keep the mixture soupy.

More on lentils : Lentils contain high levels of proteins, including the essential amino acids isoleucine and lysine, and are an essential source of inexpensive protein in many parts of the world for those who adhere to a vegetarian diet. Lentils are deficient in two essential amino acids, methionine and cysteine. However, sprouted lentils contain sufficient levels of all essential amino acids, including methionine and cysteine.

Apart from a high level of proteins, lentils also contain dietary fiber, folate, vitamin B1, and minerals. Red (or pink) lentils contain a lower concentration of fiber than green lentils (11% rather than 31%). Health magazine has selected lentils as one of the five healthiest foods. Lentils are often mixed with grains, such as rice, which results in a complete protein dish.

Lentils are relatively tolerant to drought and are grown throughout the world. About a third of the worldwide production of lentils is from India. Canada is the largest export producer of lentils in the world. Eastern Washington and the Idaho Panhandle constitutes the most important producing regions in the United States.

EXTRA, EXTRA!
Read all about it!!!

Ruth Becker Cipko



The Program Committee is looking for your input. Please let us hear from you with your suggestions for speakers and topics for our monthly meetings. You can also send your suggestions to Ruth Cipko via email at rebscots@verizon.net or phone her at 718-460-4240.

Program Schedule

- April 7 - "Exploring the 1940 Census"**
Presenter – Dorothy Dougherty
Of the National Archives at New York City
- May 5 - "Ellis Island during the Second World War"**
Presenter – Barry Moreno

"First timers" Orientation session will be from 7 to 7:30.

Please check at the sign-in desk for flyers or other sign-up sheets for upcoming events.

Bits and Pieces

GENTEAM - According to the motto "connecting genealogists," we have now started a new mailing-list at GenTeam for all lands of the former Austrian Monarchy. Queries in English and German should connect you with genealogists anywhere in the world. Start your registration for the mailing-list at www.GenTeam.at ~ John Reynolds

FRÜHLINGSGEFÜHLE - Large parts of the country are still covered in snow, but in some areas people have already had the pleasure of taking the first stroll of the year outside without a jacket. The first sign of Spring has been sighted!

This seasonal happiness is what Germans call *Frühlingsgefühle* (literally: spring feelings). *Frühlingsgefühle* describe the increased amount of energy and vitality that many experience during this time of the year. ~ Germany.info

ALLEN COUNTY LIBRARY - The Allen County Public Library located in Fort Wayne, IN has launched a new genealogy web site that will make it easier for people to find out about their family ancestry without actually visiting the library's Genealogy Center. The site includes several free databases and portals, full-text books that have been digitized by Internet Archives, the Community Album, a collection of historical photographs for the surrounding area and Ask a Librarian, where patrons can ask a genealogy librarian their reference questions directly from the website. There are also direct links to the book and microtext catalogs and to the Center's orientation video. ~ Barbara DeOliveira <http://www.genealogycenter.org/Home.aspx>

"Listen, can you hear it? Spring's sweet cantata. The strains of grass pushing through the snow. The song of buds swelling on the vine. The tender timpani of a baby robin's heart. Spring!"

~ Diane Frolov and Andrew Schneider, *Northern Exposure* ~



Wide web

DELAWARE - Click on the Digital Archives link at Delaware Public Archives archives.delaware.gov to access collections of digitized photos, Civil War records, naturalization records, historical maps and more. See the probate records database covering 1680 to 1925 at archives.delaware.gov/collections/probate.shtml

FLORIDA - The Florida Memory Project floridamemory.com courtesy of the State Library and Archives of Florida, offers a virtual trip to the Sunshine State, with digitized photos, Confederate pension applications, WWI service cards, Spanish land grants and other old documents.

GEORGIA - The Digital Library of Georgia dlg.galileo.usg.edu is gateway to a million digital objects in more than 200 collections from 60 institutions and 100 government agencies. The collection includes newspapers, books, manuscripts, aerial photos and the New Georgia Encyclopedia. Search or browse by topic, time period, county or other parameters.

Here at the Georgia Archives sos.georgia.gov/archives you can search Colonial wills and will books, Confederate pension applications and death certificates (1919 to 1927). Or look for your ancestor or the old homestead in the Vanishing Georgia Photographic Collection of almost 18,000 images.

VERMONT - At the Vermont Historical Society vermonthistory.org you can view an index to Civil War manuscripts, read articles from Vermont History, peruse Sanborn fire insurance maps (membership required) and see where city directories are stashed in area libraries.

VIRGINIA - Virginia Memory www.virginiamemory.com/collections is a roundup of digital collections from the Library of Virginia ranging from Revolutionary War bounty land warrants to questionnaires completed by Virginia WWI veterans. Recent additions include "cohabitation registers" for married former slaves and old photos from Fairfax County.

The Virginia Historical Society vahistorical.org houses digital collections that include maps, 19th-century photos and other artifacts that supplement a wide range of finding aids. ~ Genealogy Insider

GERMAN WEDDINGS - Visit this website to learn about German, and other European countries, wedding traditions. ~ Barbara DeOliveira http://www.worldweddingtraditions.com/locations/west_europe_traditions/german_traditions.html

GERMAN CANDLE CARVING - Watch this YouTube video to see a carved candle being made. It is worth watching. ~ Carl Probst http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=k7OjRYQAm64

GERMAN TECHNOLOGY - Watch this 6 minute YouTube video and be amazed at the level of technology used to build and store the Volkswagen Phaeton. ~ John Martino <http://www.youtube.com/embed/nd5WGLWNIA?rel=0>

MILITARY - Most genealogists may already know of this site. For those new to research this military grave search is very easy to use. It also includes many good links at the top of the head page concerning veterans services, history of the VA, organizations, VA locations and many, many more useful links. ~ Anthony Di Marino http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov/j2ee/servlet/NGL_v1

ACRONYMS - With more than 1,000,000 human-edited definitions, Acronym Finder is the world's largest and most comprehensive dictionary of acronyms, abbreviations, and initialisms. Acronym Finder contains more than 5 million acronyms and abbreviations. You can also search for more than 850,000 US and Canadian postal codes. ~ Anthony Di Marino <http://www.acronymfinder.com/>

BROOKLYN - For our many members who might have a connection to Williamsburg, Brooklyn and Most Holy Trinity (RC) church/school/cemetery, this site has lots of history, photos, etc. of the church, convent, nuns, orphanage, cemetery, etc., including photos of the earliest Pastors, Raffener and May. Be sure to check out the "Haunted Trinity" link on the left sidebar!! Very interesting and spooky! ~ Madeline Boverly Galbraith <http://www.mhtbrooklyn.org/>

GERMAN DISEASES - This website provides the modern German term for the 'old time' disease on the left. Some of the modern terms are linked to German Wikipedia pages from where you can switch to the corresponding English versions. Or you can put the names into <http://dictleo.org/> or <http://translate.google.com/#> to have them translated into English. Using Explorer 8? Right click on a page and select "Translate with LiveSearch." ~ Barbara DeOliveira http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_historischer_Krankheitsbezeichnungen

GOOGLE e-BOOKS - You can buy the latest books on Google but better still, you can read many books for free. Do a search at the top of the page by topic, title, or author to see what is available. <http://books.google.com/ebooks>

Do you have an interesting or helpful website to share?
Email it to the Editor and it will be included in an upcoming newsletter.

LizLov@optonline.net



March Meeting

Jo Ann Schmidt

The GGG held its monthly meeting on the first Thursday of the month, March 3, 2011 at 7:30 PM Hicksville VFW Hall Post #322 located at 320 South Broadway, Hicksville, New York. 105 people attended the meeting.

Our President, **Elizabeth Lovaglio**, opened the meeting with announcements. **Don Eckerle** announced the updating that is in progress of databases which will be available in the near future.

Ruth Cipko announced the speaker for the evening, Historian of the Town of Brookhaven, **Ms. Barbara Russell**. Ms. Russell responded to a call from the Library of Congress website for projects regarding preservation, and she did research into the preservation of individuals' personal recollections, a topic of great interest to family historians.



The three most destructive forces to personal memorabilia are temperature, water and light. The higher the temperature the higher the energy produced, and energy will break down bonds and makes objects deteriorate. Heat also dries the item, and may cause chemical reactions that create further deterioration. The higher the humidity, the greater risk of water being pulled from the environment to the item. Water has a very destructive effect on items, and beside the damage from water itself, there is an increased danger of mold growth. Therefore, it is essential that items be stored in cool temperatures, minimal humidity, and be light-protected to enable these items to endure.

Everyone should consider where they store their "treasured things." The basement is damp. The attic may be damp, but is certainly hot and has various temperature changes throughout the year. An area with temperature changes is not the best place for the longevity of items of importance so a shelf in the den might be more suitable. Actually, storing something in a closet or even under a bed might be more conducive to protecting that piece of personal history for future generations.

Light is very harmful to pictures. Photographs can fade and the images will be lost forever. Scanning old photos and using the scanned image for the framed display might best preserve pictures that are important to the family story. Precious family mementos must be protected against other destructive forces such as mold and insects. Mold must be stopped or the item will darken and will be useless to future generations. One method to kill mold is to place the item in a plastic bag and put it in the freezer. The mold will die after 24 hour exposure to freezing temperature. Another method is to clean the mold with coffee filters and rubbing alcohol. This method can be used on a book as the rubbing alcohol will evaporate in seconds, so moisture does not invade the pages.

Insects are always attracted to food and people have placed special items in scrapbooks, which may be sugar packets, flowers, menus, or napkins. They all might contain food particles, giving the insects much incentive to invade the scrapbook. In addition, insects do seem to love eating glue which is present in scrapbooks and photo albums as well.

Now that the dangers of everyday life have been identified, the family conservationist has to decide what steps need to be taken to preserve the past for the future. Photographs might be scanned and the originals identified on the reverse side of the photograph a black pencil or blue pencil. Another suggestion is to identify the scanned image rather than having only a file with a number.

If photos are currently housed in decrepit albums, the photos should be removed and saved. There are archival products, such as Mylar envelopes which are expensive but have the ability to preserve the photos safely. Mylar is a trade name and it is 100% polyester, available in different thicknesses. Albums with sticky pages that were popular in the 1980s can be very destructive to photos. All photos that are important to family history should be removed from this type of album.

Some old photos may be curling up and then cracking. Photographs originated in water and that is still useful in making them pliable. Photographic papers can be placed in cool distilled water until they become pliable. Once they straighten out, place them between two books and let them dry flat.

Keepsakes that are fabric should be stored clean. Dry cleaning methods have changed over the years, and may actually be a safe way to clean old fabric items, like quilts. If quilts have writing on them, they should be dry cleaned because washing will usually remove the ink used on the quilts. If items are going to be washed, they should be washed with cold water by hand in the bathtub. Silk garments must be dry-cleaned.

Newspapers that are considered heirlooms should be stored separately from other papers. Newspapers are acidic and archival products exist for their storage. It is advised against using plastic containers for your stored items since they actually contain the humidity, and water can actually build up inside of these storage units. There are archival quality insert pages, storage boxes, and sprays to preserve items.

Door prize winners were: Carol Lesslie, Karen Smith, Art Sniffin, Irene Sniffin, Mark Waldron
50/50 winner was: Ruth Cipko

To receive the one-page handout on saving your treasures, email GermanGenealogy@optonline.net and request a Word file or PDF.

Board of Directors

Nominations to the Board of Directors will be taken from the floor at the May membership meeting. All nominations must be seconded and all nominees must be present at the time of nomination.

13 Sources for Birth Information beyond Civil Registration

Juliana Smith

Knowing an ancestor's age is a big part of identifying him or her in other records. Unfortunately, our ancestors weren't always accurate (or in some cases truthful) when it came to giving out their age or birth date. Perhaps it was unintentional and they honestly didn't remember, or in some cases they may have had their reasons for fudging a little. Whatever the reason, in the absence of a civil birth registration, we need to turn to alternatives and the more the merrier. Here are 13 sources where you might get lucky:

- 1) **Marriage and Death Records** ~ While it's important to remember that they are not primary sources for birth information, marriage and death records often include birth dates and places.
- 2) **Census Records** ~ U.S. federal censuses records for the years 1850-1930 include ages for everyone in the household helping us to at least close in on a year, but the enumerators were also instructed to record the age of persons who were born within the census year to be stated as fractions (e.g., 1 month = 1/12, 2 months = 2/12, etc.). The 1900 census asked for the month and year of birth, as well as ages.
- 3) **Church records** ~ Religious records often pre-date civil registration and birth registers, baptism, or christening records will typically include a birth date.
- 4) **Newspapers** ~ Granted, birth announcements didn't always make it into the newspapers, but you'll sometimes find mentions in society pages, or hospital lists of babies born.
- 5) **Delayed Birth Registration** ~ Proof of when and where a person was born was required for Social Security or Railroad Retirement and for those who were born prior to civil registration this meant filing a delayed birth registration. Proof was required and although the documents won't be included with the file, details about the proof provided may include clues as to their location. You can learn more about delayed birth registrations in this article.
- 6) **Social Security Death Index (SSDI)** ~ That birth information that the Social Security Administration collected makes the Social Security Death Index (SSDI) yet another source for birth dates. While 98% of the people listed in the SSDI died after 1962, many of them were born before civil registration began.
- 7) **Passports** ~ Likewise, those applying for passports were asked about their birth dates and places. If your ancestor's applied for a passport to travel abroad to visit family or just on holiday, check the collection of U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925.
- 8) **Naturalization Records** ~ Naturalization records may contain the birth date and places for immigrants, and even some naturalization indexes include birth dates, like the example below. Ancestry.com has a growing collection of naturalization records and indexes that may include your ancestor.
- 9) **Births at Sea** ~ Births at sea were often noted in passenger lists, often along with deaths at the end of the manifest. Although you might not find a given name, the infant may be listed with the parents and other family members, or at the end of the manifest with a reference to the parents (a good reminder to explore manifests fully).
- 10) **Bibles** ~ Traditionally, pages in family bibles include spaces for the notation of births and other personal landmark events. Check with family members and see if a family Bible was passed down through other lines.
- 11) **Military** ~ Military records will often include birth information for the person who served and occasionally you'll also find birth details on family members. The Revolutionary War pension records for Mark Adams included pages from an almanac that listed the birth dates of children and grandchildren.
- 12) **Obituaries** ~ Obituaries won't always give a birth date, but there are exceptions like the one below from the Historical Newspaper Collection on Ancestry.com. You will often find an age and that can help you to estimate the birth year, and in cases where the birth place is given, it can lead to other birth-related records like church records in that place.
- 13) **Cemeteries** ~ While we typically associate cemetery records with death information, birth dates and places can sometimes be found on a tombstone, or in the records of the cemetery sexton. Millions of cemetery records have been transcribed and indexed by genealogical societies. Find-a-Grave.com also offers significant help in finding cemeteries and includes photographs of several million graves.

Source: Weekly Discovery

READING THE RECORDS

Amelia Schiller #211



In the October/November 2010 issue of *GERMAN LIFE*, there is an excellent article written by Robert A. Selig entitled "German Craftsmen from *Zunft* to *Handwerksinnung*." It relates the history of the craft training in Germany through the centuries and relates the importance of the different stages and titles to the social order.

As researchers of our ancestors, we eagerly look for the occupations they had, and duly note the titles following their names without really recognizing the significance of their achievements, both in their craft and socially. Nor do we appreciate what they had to go through to arrive at the title of "master" and why it was so important for a son to continue in the craft. Without a male heir, daughters were "married off" to the journeyman of their fathers to keep the business going.


It also helps us to understand why so many craftsmen emigrated to America. Without the financial resources, the probability of opening and owning one's own establishment was limited. There were no such barriers here. While they may not have achieved the title of "master," they did have the skills to do a creditable job and contribute to the building of America.

Members have come to meetings holding a well-worn book, looking for an explanation of its contents. What they were holding was a journeyman's journal, a "report card" of the job experiences of their ancestor as he wandered and worked his way across the land on the road to becoming a "master." This was a requirement. And sometimes they didn't make it back home.

These are the gaps, the ancestors you can't account for.

My father was apprenticed as a blacksmith. Upon completing this phase of his training, he and six fellow journeymen walked and worked their way from Speyer a/Rhein to Rome, Italy and back. I have his journal. (While in Rome, they had an audience with Pope Pius XII). It was not unusual for young men to be gone for long periods of time and to see parts of the world outside their villages.

So, if your ancestor was a "Meister" craftsman, he was well-traveled, well-tested, and an important and influential member of his community.



**HELP
WANTED**

Can you help?

GGG member Jeff Brown, #2410 from Delaware, asks for some assistance with his research. If you can lend a hand, please contact him at ntrprz@dmv.com

“Might anyone in the German Genealogy Group have some pointers for me on some proposed German research I plan to do?”

My German-born wife and I hope to travel to the Magdeburg area in September to research her family. Renate was born in 1954 in Burg bei Magdeburg and, according to the family Stammbuch, all of her 11 siblings and her parents come from that area. Any information the GGG could provide would be sincerely appreciated.

I plan to do basic genealogical research on her father's family, the **Wernstedts**, as well as her mother's family, **Goetze**. Renate does not have much information on either side. Both of her parents are dead and she was long estranged from her father, meaning she knows little more than her grandfather's first name. We do know there is a town north of Magdeburg named "Wernstedt," though it appears to be just a farming village. I know little else about it.

Renate's half-brother still lives in Magdeburg, so he knows the area, but like many Americans, he has no idea of what the genealogical resources are in the area. I assume we'll visit government offices (the town hall, or 'rathaus') and maybe some churches.”

Time to Organize Those Piles of Paper

In the February newsletter, we asked for your method for organizing your genealogy papers and treasures to share with other members. Below are two possibilities which you may find helpful. If you have your own method to share, please send it in to the Editor. We all need all the help we can get!

From Nick Kaufman # 2607

I am new to GGG and just read the February newsletter and saw your "Time to Organize" news clip. In the interest of sharing, I'll tell you what my wife (Sylvia) and I have just completed this past fall vis-à-vis the filing dilemma.

If you go to www.fileyourpapers.com there is a system that is associated with Legacy/Heritage software that I'm sure you'll find interesting if you don't already know about it. I don't think that users need to have the software to adopt the system. The site has a nice, easy-to-understand description of their system.

The basis of the system is the MRIN (marital record identification number) which Legacy—or anyone for that matter—can assign to a marital unit. Using a MRIN number and an index obviates the use of "names" in the filing. For example, our family has four generations of NICHOLAS KAUFMANNs with no middle initials and another dozen KAUFMANN women with different married names. This would be a nightmare to file by name. Using the MRIN number, I am #1, my father, it turns out, is #3, my grandfather is #6, and my great-great grandfather is number #90 (because of the sequence of entry, not because of genealogical distance.)

We've modified the system to use materials found at Staples or Office Depot stores —filing units, folders and tabs—rather than 3-ring binders that are suggested on the site. I've included pictures. My wife reminds me that our filing system covers six name areas between the two of us, Kaufmann, Desjardin, Voelger, Wisniewski, Kolacinski, Jagodinski. And for those that have a narrower focus, the 3-ring binder approach would probably work fine.

We saw that quick access to files rather than binders allowed us a lot more flexibility. We store EVERYTHING associated with that person, charts, documents, copies, letters, photographs, and ephemera where it can fit.

Anyone who can figure out the MRIN system either with or without using Legacy/Heritage/Ancestry software can do this.



From Susan Scherman #2001

Just read your paragraph in the GGG News. I have lots of piles of paper that I finally was able to organize into loose-leaf binders. Also, I put a label on the binders with the family name and dates.



I placed the papers into four piles for my mother's and father's sides. Then I bought four 5" white binders in Staples, along with 8 x 11" clear 3-hole acetate sheets. While watching T.V., with the tons of commercials, I just place the papers into the acetate sheets and they have 3 holes already in them.

Now, I have neat loose-leaf binders and I will organize them and change things around later on. But the main goal here is to get them into neat books without having the paper destroyed.

It makes it easier to grab a loose-leaf when the family comes over for special dinners. We have lots to talk about instead of watching the tube or having the kids text or use their cell phones.

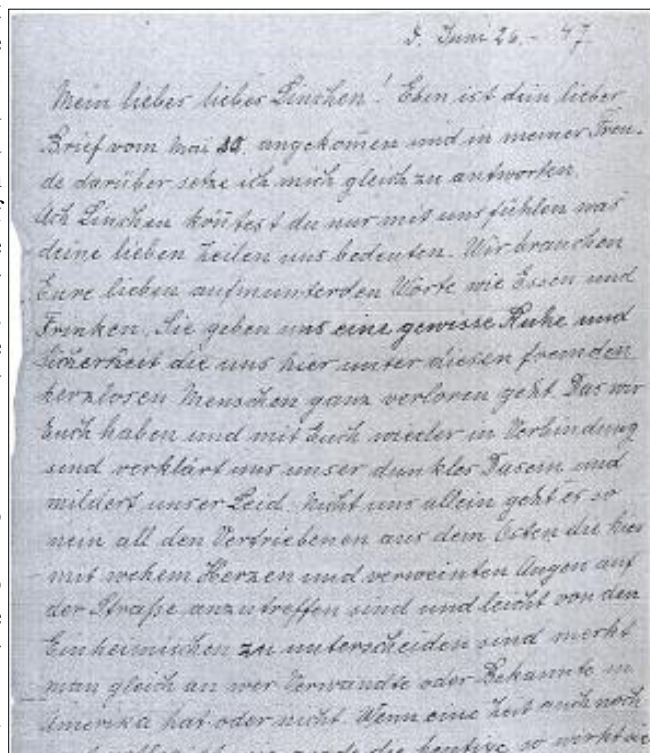
Placing maps, recipes, photos, causes of death, genetics, etc., in the books, makes it very entertaining, as well, and, it helps the kids learn geography and more about the places they came from.

A Letter from Germany

June 26, 1947

My dearest, dearest, Linchen, (Chen is an affectionate diminutive. I don't know if her name is actually Linchen or Lynn and called Linchen)

Finally your dear letter from March 30th arrived and with my joy to receive it, I am promptly replying. Ach (German expression roughly meaning, oh) Linchen, if you only knew what your lovely letter meant to us. We needed your comforting words like food and drink. You gave us a peace and security that we have lost in these strange times. That we have you and are back in touch relieves our dire existence and lessens our sorrow. Not only with us is it so - no, all of the refugees, here with aching hearts and eyes ruined from weeping, that we meet on the streets, makes one glad to have relatives and friends in America. When times are as bad as they now are, they are made tolerable by your charity and love, not just to Bishop Graf Preising, who has just returned from his trip to the United States of North America, but to us from you and the other dear relatives. Dear Linchen, I would write to thank you for the charity, and I would also like to heartfully thank you in the name of Anna Marie for the clothes that you sent. You cannot imagine the pleasure because they fit well and nothing has to be altered. Today, as she went to work, she admired herself and laughingly said that she wishes her dear aunt in America could see how pretty she is in them. You wrote to me that it was very nice that Andie(?) and his wife came to read my letter. He wants to know what we need - food or clothes. It is all so severe now, that we are grateful for all that he sends. Our Oma (grandmother) received it on her birthday and is 85 years old. She has recovered from her earlier illness and sorrow and is thankfully doing well. She especially enjoyed the coffee in the package. When relatives who are tired and stressed visit us, she laughs and says wait, I'll give you a cup of our American coffee and they feel better. Ach, all like to come visit since Oma knits and mends so much we are no longer in rags. We want to thank you for the baby things you sent Katchen (from other letter, she is her daughter) At first, she thought it would be like Mary and Joseph and she would have to put it in a manger, but now we are not as poor as the baby Jesus. Oma and I try to make something new out of the old and we get great pleasure from it. The other week we got very valuable foodstuff from CARE, which were an answer to our prayers, because it makes the difference between life and death. I already know that Charley died. I am very interested in the whole family in America. And I want to know all about you and share the happenings with you. I was always happy with you and very proud when I can show my cousins here your pictures. We are amazed at the clothes and shoes. And with the beautiful pictures, I can daily remember you. I wonder about Mary and her girls- are they all married? I did not know that Andie had a son. Since he was in the war, he must be very bitter about the Germans, but please tell him that no one is as bitter and horrified of our regime and war as us. We hated Hitler from the first and yet my poor son-in-law was drafted and sent to the Russian front. He is still not home and we wait for him with a heavy heart. The Russians promised through October of '47 to release 10,000 soldiers, so perhaps he will be one of the lucky. When you see the Russians in their sector make all former German Wehrmacht members reregister and then they disappear, one loses faith and confidence. I have come to learn that the Russians are no better than robbers and hope that their bestiality will be openly reported by history. I could write a book about it. Tomorrow Molotov goes to Paris to -discuss the negotiations. God hope something good comes from it. And now dear Linchen, for your children again a pair of stamps that they wanted me to put in the other letter, but I had to think about where they were. Anna Marie got a lot for them from her friend. Are you also interested in German stamps. If the cancellation is the same as the others, I do not know. Now my dear Linchen, that is enough for today. Say hello to your husband's aunt and the boys for me. Ach, they are already Men and one has a little son himself. But you remain young and beautiful to us, although you also have a child that looks like our Allen. Also, at your convenience, say hello to my other family members and ask Rudi whether his son was also in the war. Gerdie has no children, as far as I know. I also want to ask Aunt Lulush(?) about her Frawne(?) We heard how she lived from Allen. Has she been dead long? Write me all, okay. Now my dear child, keep safe. Your cousin, Alma and family.



Green-Wood Cemetery Brooklyn, NY

In September of 2002, the Green-Wood Cemetery launched its unprecedented Civil War Project. We knew at the time that Green-Wood was the place to be buried during and after the Civil War. We also knew that it has more Civil War generals (16 Union, 2 Confederate) than any other cemetery except Arlington and West Point. But we didn't know that, nine years later (almost twice as long as the Civil War itself), we would have identified more than 4,500 Civil War veterans at Green-Wood, including 75 Confederates, have written a biography for each, and have obtained gravestones for more than 2,000 of these veterans who lie in unmarked graves.

Now, as the sesquicentennial of the beginning of the Civil War approaches in spring, 2011, we are working on our plans to honor the service and sacrifice of these men. Events are planned for Sunday evening and Monday morning of Memorial Day weekend. Green-Wood Cemetery will be the place for New York City's sesquicentennial.

On the Saturday morning of Memorial Day weekend, volunteers will fan out across the cemetery's 478 acres, placing luminaries at each of the 4,500 graves of our Civil War veterans. Sunday night, with all those luminaries in place and lit, re-enactors in uniform will stand as honor guards at many of these graves. Civil War musicians—fiddles, a brass band, and singers, will perform Civil War songs across the grounds. Artillery guns will fire. The public will walk the grounds in tribute.

We also will mount a Civil War exhibition in our Historic Chapel, featuring artifacts primarily drawn from our Historic Fund collections. And, the third edition of our illustrated biographical dictionary on CD, with hundreds of portrait/photographs, will be issued.

Then, on Monday, Memorial Day, we will hold a march out to our Civil War Soldiers' Lot, where 127 Civil War veterans, many of whom shed their blood at Antietam, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and other battlefields, are buried. There descendants and re-enactors will read the names of many of the men for whom Green-Wood is the "final camping ground."

We are very excited about our upcoming Memorial Day Weekend and hope you will join us.

Here's our tentative schedule:

Memorial Day Weekend 2011 at Brooklyn's Green-Wood Cemetery

New York's Civil War Sesquicentennial Headquarters

Saturday, May 28, 2011

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Hundreds of volunteers will place and light luminaries on the graves of 4,500 Civil War veterans.

Encampments at Green-Wood: Union re-enactors will pitch their tents in the Meadow, near the cemetery's entrance; Confederate re-enactors will camp along Sylvan Water, a large pond—fires permitted, wood supplied, port-o-sans available.

A gallery exhibition, in Green-Wood's Historic Chapel, "Final Camping Ground," will be on view the entire weekend. On display will be Civil War items from the Green-Wood Historic Fund's collections and items borrowed from historical societies and descendants.

Sunday, May 29, 2011

9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.: Placement of luminaries continues, as needed.

8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m.: Candlelight Tribute

Across the Grounds—re-enactors stationed as honor guards at gravesites, musicians playing along the route, as the public walks through the cemetery.

10:00 p.m.-12:00 midnight—grounds remain open, campfires are lit, and encampments are open for visitors.

Encampments continue through the night.

Monday, May 30 (Memorial Day), 2011

11:00 a.m.: The Grand March, with re-enactors, descendants, an Armed Forces Color Guard and musicians, march out to Civil War Soldiers' Lot. Here the names of those buried at Green-Wood, and excerpts from their wartime letters, will be read by descendants and historians.

1:00 p.m.: Bells ring across Brooklyn in tribute.

1:00 p.m.: infantry and artillery salute; ceremonies conclude with Taps.

Contributed by Mark Waldron

Considered to be the oldest man in New York City, Carl Berner of Middle Village (third from left) celebrated his 109th birthday in style with family and friends at his home last Thursday, Jan. 27. Born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1902, Berner came to the United States at the age of 16 and would go on to become the night building superintendent at the Chrysler Building in Manhattan. Following his service there, he would open his own toy-making business. Berner moved to Middle Village with his late wife Margaret in 1938 and became one of the first members of the Eliot Avenue Civic Association, a forerunner to the present-day Juniper Park Civic Association (JPCA). Shown in the photo (from left to right) are Robert Holden, JPCA president; Theresa Reilly; Amy Holden; Emily Berner (Carl Berner's daughter); and Tony Nunziato

"From the Times Newsweekly Serving Queens and Brooklyn"

Editor: Robert Pozarycki. ~ Times Newsweekly/Ridgewood Times



Contributed by Anthony Di Marino

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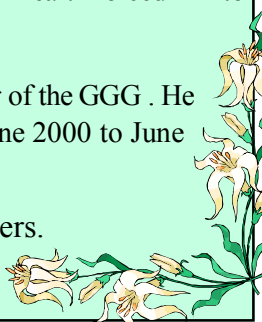


Passings ...

John Schilling joined the GGG in 1999 and attended meetings and activities until ill health forced him to cut back.

Frederick W. Finger joined the GGG in March of 1996 and was a founding member of the GGG . He served as Vice President from 1996 to 1998. Fred also served on the Board of Directors from June 2000 to June 2002.

We extend our sincere condolences to the family and friends of two long-time GGG members.





New Members

2618 Wittnebert, Mary Alice, Hackettstown, NJ	9 4 9 M E M B E R S
2619 Alvich, Pamela, New York, NY	
2620 Barry, Christine M., Brooklyn, NY	
2621 Grove, Robert B., Ocean Township, NJ Recommended	
2622 Doering, Joanne, Southold, NY Gift	
2623 Morrison, Glenda, Cochrane, Alberta, Canada, Gift	
2624 Kenny, Marsha, Remsenburg, NY	
2625 Pedersen, Diane, Newberry, FL	
2626 O'Leary, Jill, Brooklyn, NY	
2627 Tulowitzki, Renee M., Elma, NY	
2628 Elsner, Christine, Middletown, NJ	
2629 Rachels, Lois E., Sherwood, AR	
2630 Horn, William Anthony, Seaford, DE	
2631 Stumpp, Steve, Sandi Park, NM	
2632 Martin, Millie, Green Acres, WA Gift	
2633 Robertson, Barbara L., Jackson, MI Gift	
2634 Bandelow, Elizabeth Ann, N. Redington Beach, FL	

Bierhaus Will Bring Munich to Midtown

Bierhaus is scheduled to open March 10th just three blocks from Grand Central. And yes, the waitresses will be in dirndls and the waiters will be in lederhosen.

The food and drink menu will be similar to the one at the Hofbräuhaus in Pittsburgh, with the beer list comprised of six varieties of Hofbräu (there'll be German schnapps and wine as well). The exterior is in the style of a Bavarian chalet (with peaked roof), and the interior (modeled after the original Hofbräuhaus in Munich, with ten-foot communal tables) should get plenty of sun thanks to the large skylight on the second floor and a 50-foot balcony with open doors. There'll be seating for 150 and live bands twice a week.

It'll be open from 11 a.m. till 2 a.m. most days, and till 4 a.m. Thursday through Friday.

Bierhaus, 712 Third Ave., nr. 45th St.

Contributed by Debby Kozel

German Genealogy Group Newsletter
PO Box 1004
Kings Park, NY 11754

Address Service Requested

The German Genealogy Group will hold its next monthly meeting on **Thursday, April 7, 2011** at the
Hicksville VFW, 320 South Broadway (Route 107), Hicksville, NY

Orientation session will start at 7 PM for beginners and newcomers.

The regular meeting will start at 7:30. Building opens at 6:30.

The topic of this month's meeting will be — “Exploring the 1940 Census”

Presenter – Dorothy Dougherty

Of the National Archives at New York City

The 1940 Census will be made publicly available April 2, 2012. Taken during the Great Depression and the New Deal, and on the brink of US involvement in World War II, the 1940 Census documents Americans during a time of national struggle. This workshop will prepare family historians for this release by describing the genealogical information that can be uncovered in this document.

**Don't forget to renew
your membership!**

