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Genealogy Pointers (04-21-09)

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Interview with DREW SMITH, Author of the New Book, *Social Networking for Genealogists*

Genealogy Pointers: What is social networking?

Drew Smith: Social networking is the use of online communication tools to interact with other people about shared interests.

GP: How/why did you become interested in social networking in its various manifestations?

DS: I have always been interested in the use of computers for exchanging information. In the 1980s, I worked for an academic computing department at a university, where I helped several faculty use an online message board system as a way for their students to communicate with each other about course-related content. When I became involved in genealogy in the early 1990s, I immediately saw the value of mailing lists and message board for helping researchers to find other researchers who might have the answers to their questions.

GP: What kinds of issues/subjects do social networkers converse about?

DS: Social networkers converse about any topic imaginable. They discuss popular entertainment, such as movies, television, music, and sports; they engage in debate about politics and religion; they share tips about raising children and taking care of pets; they exchange information about their professions and their hobbies. They share their ideas and experiences about health, exercise, finance, and anything else that strikes their fancies.

GP: Once people get hooked up via social networking, do they try to meet each other in person? In other words, is social networking more intentional and interest-driven, or is it more relational?

DS: A lot depends upon the focus of the social networking. For instance, some social networking is about making new friends who share a common interest and meeting up

with them at a music concert or a sporting event. Some social networking is more about professional networking, where people might meet up in person at a professional conference. And with other social networking, it's enough for people just to have others they can talk to online about their interests.

GP: Have you dabbled in social networking in disciplines other than genealogy?

DS: When I worked for a university computing center, providing support services to students and faculty, I discovered how useful it was for me to keep in touch with people at other universities who had the same job I did. Later, when I became a full-time university instructor, I used forms of social networking to keep communication flowing among my students. As a librarian during the past few years, I've quickly come to realize that librarians are in the forefront of many social networking tools, because librarians look for new ways to share information.

GP: What seems to be the biggest payoff for genealogists who network?

DS: Genealogists were among the very first social networkers, when they first began using mailing lists and message boards. Before then, the only good way to get your research questions out in front of others was to publish them as queries in newsletters and journals. Now, genealogists have an enormous array of social networking tools that get their questions out in front of countless people, and make it so much easier to collaborate on research projects.

GP: Can you give us some examples of the time- or money-savings results you or others have experienced from social networking?

DS: One of the things I have enjoyed most in the past few years is the production of a weekly podcast on the topic of genealogy, "The Genealogy Guys Podcast," with co-host George G. Morgan. This is another form of social networking, because our listeners are encouraged to e-mail us with their comments and questions, and their e-mail to us often forms the content of later episodes.

Not surprisingly, I talk about my own family research during the podcast, and in one of those episodes, I discussed the cemetery in which my great-great-grandmother was buried in New Jersey. Soon after, I received e-mails from two different listeners offering to go to the cemetery and take pictures of the gravestones. One of them later did and sent me dozens of digital photos of the primary stone, plus a side of the stone that listed my great-grandparents and my grandfather.

In another episode, I mentioned a restaurant that my late cousin had invested in, near San Diego some years ago, which I had discovered while searching in a database of California alcohol licenses, and I soon received photos of the inside of the restaurant showing where my cousin usually sat!

GP: Why did you decide to write *Social Networking for Genealogists*?

DS: Although many genealogists have become computer-literate in the past decade, I felt that their use of the Internet for genealogical research was primarily limited to exchanging e-mail, searching free and commercial databases, and using Google. Some

had discovered mailing lists and message boards, but I suspected that many were put off by all of the strangely named new tools that had sprung up in the past few years, such as blogs, wikis, podcasts, Flickr, and so forth.

In my opinion, computer technology comes in waves. First, in the 1980s, genealogists discovered the value in using personal computers. Then, in the 1990s, they discovered the value of the online world, with e-mail, Google, databases, and personal websites. Today, the discovery that genealogists should make is that there are a bunch of new tools that make sharing research information easier and more fun.

GP: Are there myths or other mistaken notions that genealogists have about social networking that prevents them from getting involved?

DS: Absolutely! First, there's the myth that social networking is mostly used by only by teenagers and twentysomethings to talk to their friends. Or that blogs are mostly just people ranting about politics and religion. Or that podcasts and video websites are nothing but music and pop culture.

Second, there's the myth that when you use a social networking site you have to share a lot of private information. In fact, there's usually not much more you have to do other than create an account under whatever username you want, with a valid e-mail address that you don't have to share with others. If you add additional information about yourself, it's entirely up to you.

Third, there may be worries that social networking sites come and go and that a lot of time invested in one site might be lost. But many of these sites are owned and operated by some of the biggest names in the online world, such as Google and Yahoo. They aren't likely to close up shop tomorrow.

GP: If you were to rate social networking as a genealogical methodology, do you see it as more of an add-on, more for fun, or something central to one's research?

DS: Social networking can be a lot of fun, sharing your successes with other genealogists and making online friends all over the world who are as enthusiastic about doing research as you are. But it's more than just fun, and more than just an add-on. It's a modern way to extend your reach as a researcher to the widest possible audience. Efficient, effective researchers always look for ways to discover what other people have already learned, to avoid unnecessary expenditures of time and money. Social networking tools can link researchers to each other in countless ways, whether it's shared interest in a particular surname, location, ethnic group, or methodology. Social networking tools provide new ways to teach and learn. Today, we find it hard to imagine doing research without e-mail, the Web, and our personal computers. In a few years, we'll find it hard to imagine doing research without social networking tools.

GP: Why do you believe that Social Networking is the wave of the future for genealogical research?

DS: We have to remember that genealogical research is just one type of information-seeking behavior, and by seeing the general direction that people are moving in to find the information that they need, we can see the general direction of the future of genealogical research. After all, the general population is moving to more portable computing, from desktop computers to laptops to netbooks and handheld devices. We see people moving from reading printed newspapers, to reading news sites online, to reading customized news feeds from many different news sources. And we see people going online to see the opinions and experiences of others before they buy something.

Social networking builds upon mobile computing, customized information, and collaboration. Genealogists are like everyone else; they want information wherever they happen to be, customized just for them (in their case, information about their own ancestors. And they are dependent upon other researchers and volunteers to help them get it more quickly and more easily.

For more information about Drew Smith's new book, *Social Networking for Genealogists*, please click on the following link:

LINK

DECIPHERING OLD ENGLISH HANDWRITING

Just about anyone who takes genealogy seriously is destined to face the challenge of reading original (or microfilm copies of) records written in an unfamiliar cursive style. If your research takes you back to at least the 19th century, you'll encounter census records, wills, deeds, and multifarious other records that you'll strain to decipher. Records from the colonial period will elicit a double-take if you've never seen them before. You'll run into "ff" where you might expect an f, and an "f" sometimes stands for "s." The ancient abbreviation "Maps" should be read as "Mass" for Massachusetts. The letters "U" and "V," as well as "u" and "v," were used interchangeably. On the whole, the following lowercase letters are most difficult to read, especially in 17th-century documents: "c," "e," "h," "r," "s," and "t."

Once you've figured out what the letters are, you'll need to bone up on old abbreviations for terms in common usage today. For instance, "o.s.p." is short for "died without issue"; "yt" stands for "that"; "als" signifies an "alias"; "d.v.m." means "died while mother was living"; while "d.s.p." means "died without issue." Did you know that "B.L.W." means bounty land warrant, or that "do" was short for "ditto, or the same as above," a notation you'll encounter repeatedly in census records?

The challenges don't end there. You'll have to learn to decipher numerals as well as letters. Even after you get familiar with a certain era's lettering, you may find that what was conventional in 1700 is unrecognizable 50 years earlier. Then, of course, there is the problem of individual styles of writing.

For the novice, decoding early handwriting can be an intimidating task. If you are a beginner, you may wish to get your hands on Kip Sperry's excellent handbook, **READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING**, the best tool we know of for teaching how to read and understand the handwriting found in documents commonly used in genealogical research. This guide explains techniques for reading early American documents, provides samples of alphabets and letter forms, and defines commonly used terms and abbreviations.

Perhaps best of all, the volume presents numerous examples of early American records for the reader to work with. Arranged by degree of difficulty (from the relatively easy-to-read documents of the 19th century to the more difficult ones of the 17th), the documents showcase examples of handwriting styles, letter forms, abbreviations, and terminology typically found in early American records. Each document--there are nearly 100 of them at various stages of complexity--appears with the author's transcription on a facing page, enabling the reader to check his/her own transcription. This strategy allows the researcher to attain proficiency in reading the documents at a natural rate of progression.

Listen to what the experts have to say about **READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING**:

"The further back in time our research takes us, the more 'plain English' looks like a foreign language. That's why Sperry's 'plain English' guide to not-so-plain English writing is an absolute basic book for every genealogy shelf," says Elizabeth Shown Mills, CG, FASG.

According to the "National Genealogical Society Quarterly," "'Reading Early American Handwriting' is a timeless reference whose value will increase as more early-American documents become available to researchers of many disciplines."

If you're planning to consult original records of the 19th, 18th, or 17th century, or earlier, we encourage you to let **READING EARLY AMERICAN HANDWRITING** be your guide.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=5513&NLC-GenPointers1

One-Week SALE on Selected NEW ENGLAND CDs
(Special prices in effect until 11:59 PM EDT, Monday, April 27, 2009)

GENEALOGICAL DICTIONARY of New England, 1600s-1700s

This Family Archive CD is composed of the two greatest works ever published on New England Genealogy: James Savage's four-volume "Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England" and its companion volume, "Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire" by Walter G. Davis, Sybil Noyes, and Charles T. Libby. All genealogical research on early New England families must begin here. It is wonderful to have these authoritative volumes available on a single CD, with an electronic index as a finding-aid.

Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=7169&NLC-GenPointers1

ENGLISH ORIGINS OF NEW ENGLAND FAMILIES

This Family Archive CD contains hundreds of articles that were originally published in "The New England Historical and Genealogical Register" and subsequently collected and reprinted by GPC in six volumes under the title "English Origins of New England Families." Treating more than 1,500 families and referencing 150,000 individuals, this work contains all the immigrant origin data published in the first 137 volumes of the prestigious "Register." It is interesting to note that almost all living Americans with colonial Yankee forebears descend from several of the 1,500 immigrants covered in this work.

Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99

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EARLY NEW ENGLAND SETTLERS, 1600s-1800s

The lineages, family histories, immigration records, vital records, and historical sketches included on this Family Archive CD contain information on approximately 190,000 individuals. Originally published by GPC, the 21 titles reproduced here are the bedrock of New England genealogy, comprising many of the most celebrated books ever published on the subject--books like "One Hundred and Sixty Allied Families" by John Osborne Austin and "Genealogical Register of the First Settlers of New England" by John Farmer.

Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99

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NEW ENGLAND FAMILIES #2, 1600s-1800s

This Family Archive CD contains electronically searchable text of the first and third series of William Cutter's popular compendium, "New England Families, Genealogical

and Memorial." The eight volumes that make up these two distinct series contain about 2,000 genealogies and refer to approximately 20,000 related individuals.

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GENEALOGICAL DICTIONARY OF NEW ENGLAND, 1600s-1700s

This extraordinary reference tool incorporates the two greatest works ever published on New England genealogy: "Genealogical Dictionary of the First Settlers of New England," by James Savage; and "Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire," by Walter G. Davis, Sybil Noyes, and Charles T. Libby. Given the tight, interlocking nature of New England genealogical research, you're destined to make repeated use of the reference works on this fully indexed CD. When you compare the \$29.99 price of the CD with the nearly \$200.00 retail price of the books it encompasses, this is a no-brainer purchase for any New England researcher.

Was \$39.99 Now \$29.99

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=7169&NLC-GenPointers1

"THE GERMANS AND GERMANY," by Angus Baxter

[This article is condensed from the chapter by the same name in the newly updated Fourth Edition of Mr. Baxter's classic how-to book, *IN SEARCH OF YOUR GERMAN ROOTS* (Marian, Please make the title a link here as well as in the next article.) Readers should note that, in the interest of brevity, a number of tables in the book which describe the migration and distribution of the German population and the contemporary archival holdings of other nations that have a bearing on German genealogy have been omitted from this except.]

The development and coalescence of the German nation took many centuries. The word "Deutsch" (German) was first used in the eighth century, but it only referred to the spoken language of the area known as eastern Franconia. This empire reached its height of importance under the Emperor Charlemagne (Karl der Grosse), and after his death in 814 it disintegrated. The western section eventually became the area we now know as France. The eastern section varied in area over the centuries, but the main area--the heartland--became known as the Deutschland (the land of the Germans). By 911 the Duke of Franconia was elected King of the Franks, and later King of the Romans. By the 11th century the area became known as the Roman Empire, and by the 13th the Holy Roman Empire. In the 15th century the words "German nation" were added.

Before and during all of these dynastic and political events, the German tribes overran most of the original Roman Empire as far east as the Elbe River--beyond it were the fierce Slavic tribes. During this period the tribes took firm root in what we now know as Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, northern Italy, the Netherlands, and the Baltic states. They were also invited into Transylvania by the Hungarian king in 1150. Siebenburgen--the German name for Transylvania--derives from the seven fortified towns established by the Germans. Although they came from the Rhine and Moselle areas, they were known as "Saxons." Some 5,000 settlers were given as much land as they could cultivate and allowed to retain their own customs and language. Some did not stay long but moved south into the area known as the Banat, or west into Hungary proper. After eight centuries their descendants are still in Transylvania. However, there are now only some half-million of them, since the rest fled to Germany when the Communists took over after the Second World War.

While all of this was going on, the Order of the Teutonic Knights and the Livonian Brothers of the Sword were extending German power into the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Teutonic Knights were formed originally to take part in the Crusades, but they eventually settled in Prussia in 1309 and then extended their power and influence eastward into Livonia and Courland. At the same time King Andrew II of Hungary called on the Teutonic Knights to protect Transylvania from the Cumans and the Mongols in the east. So both northeastern and southeastern Europe were "colonized" by the Germans. The prime aim of the Knights was conquest and loot, but behind them came settlers, bringing a predominant German influence into the conquered territories. The Drive to the East (Drang nach Osten) started with Charlemagne's armies and the Teutonic Knights and ended with Hitler.

During this period there were also smaller migrations to Schlesien (Silesia), which is now divided between the Czech Republic and Poland, and to Bessarabia--until 1945 Romanian and now largely in Moldova. In the reign of the empress Maria Theresa of Austria (1740-1780) many Germans--the so-called Danubian Swabians--migrated to four areas of Hungary: Bacska, the Banat, the Kingdom of Croatia, and part of Slovakia. A number of these settlers later moved into Ukraine, Bessarabia, and other areas of southern Russia. Others, like the Zipsers, settled in Slovakia.

After the First Partition of Poland in 1772, Frederick the Great of Prussia (1740-1786) settled West Prussia and the area around Bromberg with German immigrants from Wurttemberg and Baden-Durlach.

In the middle of the 18th century, the empress Catherine the Great of Russia (1762-1796) invited all foreigners who possessed skills of some kind to come to her country as settlers and colonists. In cases of financial hardship, the cost of transportation was paid. In addition, all settlers received a loan of money toward the cost of building a house and buying livestock and farm or trade equipment, with repayment required in ten years.

The proclamation of the empress was distributed throughout Europe but did not meet with any great response except in the Germanic area and, to a much smaller degree,

Sweden. Most of the colonists came from Hesse (Hessen) and the Rhineland, but all German-speaking areas were represented in varying numbers.

The areas opened up for settlement by the empress were under-populated and open to frequent attacks by the Ottoman Turks. The Germans, for their part, were eager to settle for a variety of reasons. Germany as we know it today did not exist. It was a vast conglomeration of 1,789 kingdoms, principalities, grand duchies, dukedoms, electorates, free states, and free cities--down to tiny independent states of a few hectares. Men were dragged off into various warring armies, women and children were raped or killed or both, agriculture was ruined by the constant wars, and people starved. There was also religious persecution, high taxes, civil disturbances, and in many areas a high population density. Life was miserable and dangerous for ordinary people, and it was no wonder the grass in the next field looked much greener.

The whole story is documented in a remarkable two-volume work by a very remarkable man, Dr. Karl Stumpp. It is entitled "The Emigration from Germany to Russia 1763-1862" and was published by the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR). This work lists the names of some 50,000 German settlers, with their places of origin and settlement.

When the German armies invaded the USSR in 1941, they were welcomed by the majority of the Germans living in Ukraine. When the Wehrmacht retreated in 1942, many of the German settlers left too, fearing reprisals from the Red Army, and they were wise. They made their way back to Germany, the fatherland their ancestors had left more than a century before, and those left behind in Ukraine were killed or imprisoned.

Millions of Germans in other areas of Europe became refugees after the Second World War. In 1945 Czechoslovakia regained the Sudetenland. This German-speaking area had been taken from Austria in 1919. In 1938 it was reunited with Germany. After 1945 the three-and-a-half million German inhabitants were expelled and their property and possessions confiscated. Other refugees from Poland and the USSR brought the total number of Germans returning home to over 13 million.

Quite apart from the mass movements of population shown above, there was, of course, a continual movement to and from the multitude of German states before and after unification in 1871. Most of these movements of individuals were recorded, and the records are in the various state archives. If a man wished to move from Hannover to Brunswick, for example, he would notify the Hannover police of his impending departure and his destination. On arrival in Brunswick he had to report to the police within three days. They, in turn, notified the Hannover police that he had arrived.

Although these tremendous upheavals will have a major effect on your ancestor-hunting, you must also become aware of other problems ahead. For example, there are large numbers of Germans still in Denmark, Belgium, and Alsace (Elsass), and many German speakers in the South Tirol--now in Italy.

In addition, you must consider the "lost territories" of Germany and what has happened to their genealogical records. These territories consist of the following areas:

To Belgium: In 1919 Eupen, Malmedy, and Moresnet

To Czechoslovakia: In 1945 the western part of Silesia (Schlesien)

To Denmark: In 1920 North Schleswig

To France: In 1919 Alsace (Elsass)

To Poland: In 1945 the eastern parts of Brandenburg, Pomerania (Pommern), the southern part of East Prussia (Ostpreussen), Posen, the western part of Silesia (Schlesien), West Prussia (Westpreussen), and Danzig

To the USSR: In 1945 the northern part of East Prussia (Ostpreussen) and Memel

The Process of German Unification

Germany only existed as an undivided country from 1871 until 1945--in contrast with England and France, which had been unified for more than five centuries. Systems of government in the various German states ranged from absolute monarchies to the near-democracy of some of the electorates and free cities. Various forms of confederation or economic grouping took hold, flowered for a few years, and died. Each state had its own laws, archives, and system of recording events. You cannot say, for example, that "censuses were first held in Germany in 1871." That is true for the unified Germany, but censuses were taken in Wurttemberg in 1821, in Baden in 1852, and so on. The only unified force in the Germanic area was the church--first the Catholic and later the Lutheran.

By the middle of the 19th century the number of self-governing German states had been reduced to 34. Some of these formed the German Confederation, which also included Austria--still trying to assert its position as leader of the German people. However, the alliance was a shaky one because of the emerging power of Prussia, under the leadership of the great Bismarck. The two rivals did join together in an attack on Denmark in 1866 and seized Schleswig-Holstein, which they divided between them. A few months later they quarreled over the "spoils" and Prussia took over the whole territory. At this point Austria withdrew from the German Confederation and joined with Hungary in 1867 to form the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The German Confederation was then renamed the North German Confederation under the leadership of Prussia, and it included all the states north of the River Main. The eastern boundary was extended as far as Memel. In 1871, following a short and successful war against France, Prussia persuaded the southern states to join the Confederation with its new name of German Empire (Deutsches Reich). The king of Prussia was then proclaimed emperor on January 16, 1871. Suddenly, in the very center of Europe, a most powerful new country existed, and for the first time in over a thousand years the German people were one nation under strong leadership.

In the short period of a quarter of a century the German people had developed a pride in their nation, which was strong enough to overcome the hatreds and mistrusts of a thousand years of division and despair.

The new empire included the following territory:

- (a) Kingdoms of Bavaria, Prussia, Saxony, and Wurttemberg
- (b) Grand Duchy of Baden
- (c) Free Cities of Bremen, Hamburg, and Lubeck, and Anhalt, Brunswick, Darmstadt, Hesse, Lippe, Mecklenburg, Oldenburg, Reuss, and the various states comprising Thuringia. (Justice, education, health, and police were left under the control of the individual states.)

During the period of unification between 1871 and 1945, little or no attempt was made to centralize records in one place such as the capital, Berlin. Instead, records remained in the capital cities of the original states. In retrospect, this was a blessing to ancestor-hunters because the destruction of German records during the Second World War was surprisingly small. Imagine what would have happened if everything had been in Berlin! Details have already been given of the post-war dismemberment of Germany and the transfer of territory to Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the USSR. The remaining part of Germany was then divided into the eastern half, occupied by the USSR, and the western half, occupied by Britain, Belgium, France, and the United States. These two parts later became the German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, or D.D.R.) and the Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, or B.R.D.). Details of the division were as follows:

D.D.R.: Anhalt, Brandenburg (western part), part of Brunswick (Braunschweig), Mecklenburg-Schwerin, Mecklenburg-Strelitz, Reuss, Sachsen-Altenburg, Sachsen-Meiningen, Sachsen-Weimar, Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, and Schwarzburg-Sondershausen. Also four provinces of the State of Prussia (the parts remaining after territory taken by the three countries mentioned above).

B.R.D.: Baden, Bavaria (Bayern), part of Brunswick (Braunschweig), Coburg, Lippe, Oldenburg, Schaumberg-Lippe, part of Thuringia (Thuringen), Waldeck, Westphalia (Westfalen), and Wurttemberg; and five provinces of the State of Prussia--Hanover (Hannover), Hessen-Nassau, Rhineland (Rheinland), Schleswig-Holstein, and Sigmaringen.

After the division of Germany in 1945 various changes were made in each section of the country, and they were administered as follows:

D.D.R.: Originally this consisted of five provinces (Lander). These were abolished and replaced by 15 districts (Kreise). However, the D.D.R., unlike the B.R.D., was not a federal state, and all power was centered in the capital (East, or Ost, Berlin).

B.R.D.: Originally this consisted of ten federal states (Bundeslander, or just Lander): Baden-Wurttemberg, Bavaria (Bayern), Bremen (city-state), Hamburg (city-state), Hesse

(Hessen), Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen), North Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen), Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz), Saarland, and Schleswig-Holstein. The city-state of Berlin (West) was integrated into the legal and economic system of the Federal Republic. The republic was further divided into 25 administrative areas (Regierungsbezirke), 327 counties or districts (Kreise), and about 8,500 municipalities. [Today] the 16 states of the unified country and their capital cities are:

Baden-Württemberg (Stuttgart)
Bayern (Munich/München)
Berlin
Brandenburg (Potsdam)*
Bremen
Hamburg
Hessen (Wiesbaden)
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Schwerin)*
Niedersachsen (Hannover)
Nordrhein-Westfalen (Düsseldorf)
Rheinland-Pfalz (Mainz)
Saarland (Saarbrücken)
Sachsen (Dresden)*
Sachsen-Anhalt (Magdeburg)*
Schleswig-Holstein (Kiel)
Thuringen (Erfurt)*

The Lander marked with an asterisk () are the political divisions of the area previously known as East Germany. They replace the 15 districts (Bezirk) mentioned [above]. The names of the districts within each of the five Lander are:

Brandenburg: Berlin, Cottbus, Frankfurt, Potsdam
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: Neubrandenburg, Rostock, Schwerin
Sachsen: Dresden, Chemnitz (formerly Karl-Marx-Stadt), Leipzig
Sachsen-Anhalt: Halle, Magdeburg
Thuringen: Erfurt, Gera, Suhl

The Continuing Migration

After the Second World War, approximately 13 million Germans left their homes in other European countries and found refuge in the Fatherland. Since the unification of Germany and free emigration from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, there has been a huge influx of ethnic Germans. Nearly 400,000 came in 1989, followed by more than 200,000 annually between 1991 and 1995.

The Germans in Kazakhstan may number as many as a million--some descended from the Germans who originally settled in the Volga Basin at the invitation of Catherine the Great, and others who were exiled from Ukraine by Stalin.

If you know you have German relatives in the former Soviet Union, Poland, or Romania you may be able to make contact through the International Red Cross or the Federal Ministry of the Interior in Bonn. [END OF ARTICLE]

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ANGUS BAXTER & ERNEST THODE: One-Two Punch for German Researchers

Hopefully, the foregoing excerpt from Angus Baxter's *IN INSEARCH OF YOUR GERMAN ROOTS* has whetted your appetite for an excellent, reader-friendly introduction to German genealogy. Other equally informative chapters cover German-Jewish records, the German records of the LDS Church, the archives of Germanic genealogy, the Germans in the U.S. and Canada, record holdings in Germany, and much more.

If you have German ancestors, it's only a matter of time before you will have to contend with documents written in German and, if you go back prior to 1945, the German *Fraktur* style of writing. You won't find all the thousands of specialized terms that arise in German genealogical source documents in a standard German-English dictionary. You **WILL** find them in Ernest Thode's masterful *GERMAN-ENGLISH GENEALOGICAL DICTIONARY*. Since 1992, Mr. Thode's *DICTIONARY* has established itself as the most valuable desktop tool for translating German genealogical documents.

Scroll down to learn more about the best one-two punch for Germanic genealogy available in print.

IN SEARCH OF YOUR GERMAN ROOTS. Fourth Edition, Updated [2008]

This guide is designed to help you trace your German ancestry not only in Germany but in all the German-speaking areas of Europe. First, it discusses the LDS Church's International Genealogical Index (IGI), which contains hundreds of thousands of entries from German parish registers. Then the narrative takes the reader back to the old country, where sources and archives are discussed in detail, especially Evangelical and Catholic Church records and records of state and city archives. Finally, Mr. Baxter presents a list of family archives, a list of genealogical associations in Germany, a list of German genealogical associations in the U.S., and a bibliography. The 2008 update to the fourth edition includes many websites for these records.

http://www.genealogical.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&item_number=396&NLC-GenPointers1

GERMAN-ENGLISH GENEALOGICAL DICTIONARY

Ernest Thode's *DICTIONARY* is designed for the family researcher who has little or no knowledge of German but who nevertheless needs to make a translation of German-language documents. The *DICTIONARY* covers thousands of German terms and defines

them in single words or brief phrases. Among the many categories of entries included in the DICTIONARY are family relationships, days of the week, map terms, legal terms, cardinal and ordinal numbers, roman numerals, signs of the zodiac, coins, liquid and dry measures, measures of length, place names, historical territories, geographical terms, occupations, titles, military ranks, types of taxes, illnesses, calendar days, male and female given names, heraldry, abbreviations, books of the Bible, and common genealogical words from Danish, Dutch, French, Latin, and Polish. In conjunction with a standard German-English dictionary, the user of this work should be able to make a word-by-word translation of any German document and understand it.

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Of related interest:

GERMAN-AMERICAN NAMES. Third Edition

This third edition of GERMAN-AMERICAN NAMES by Prof. George F. Jones is longer than the earlier editions and has several thousand more entries. Like its predecessors, it attempts to explain the meaning of names borne today by Americans that derive from the German language or its dialects. Moreover, it deals with the Americanization of some of those names, explaining the social and historical phenomena that contributed to the distinctive character of German-American names. It deals as well with names many of us would never have thought of as German.

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF GERMAN-AMERICAN Genealogical Research

A worthy companion to Mr. Baxter's book, above, the emphasis of this work, by Clifford Neal Smith and Anna P-C Smith, is on German genealogical research in America, with special focus on immigration records, German ethnic religious bodies in America, and manuscript and published source materials, both in America and Germany. The ENCYCLOPEDIA also provides American researchers with background material on German customs, sociological stratification, governmental organization, and ethnographic considerations having a bearing on immigrant ancestors.

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BLOG: The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS)

The Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) is a database of place names created by the U.S. Geological Survey encompassing more than two million entries throughout the U.S. and its territories. Genealogists should regard GNIS as the most comprehensive gazetteer available, and Carolyn Barkley tells them how to use it in this week's featured

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