

Exploring German Records in the Ancestry Library Edition Database

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Ancestry Library Edition

Ancestry Library Edition is comparable to the “World Explorer” personal subscription that includes international as well as U.S. records. The Library edition does not include some databases found in the personal subscription and public family trees can be viewed but not edited. Personal information, such as DNA results and matches, cannot be viewed on the Library Edition.

General overview of databases

- Some databases are native to Ancestry, but others are contributed by other providers or linked to websites.
- A search on “Germany” in Ancestry’s “card catalog” returns more than 2000 databases in various categories.

Major databases

Hamburg Passenger Lists

- Hamburg Passenger Lists—1/3 of passengers embarking from Hamburg were German, 2/3 from Eastern Europe. 90% of Eastern European emigrants left through Hamburg during the period covered by the database.
- “Hamburg Passenger Lists, 1850–1934” are searchable in the Ancestry database for the years 1850–1914 and 1920–1926.
- “Hamburg Passenger Lists, Handwritten Indexes, 1855–1934” are not searchable and must be browsed. The indexes are useful for the years not covered in the Ancestry index or when a name entered in the search returns no results. Names are divided by letter of the alphabet and year of departure.

Bremen Passenger Lists

- Most Bremen passenger lists were destroyed, either intentionally or through WWII bombing.
- Transcripts of lists 1907–1908 and 1913–1914 and records covering 1920–1939 were discovered after WWII.
- “Bremen, German, Passenger Lists Index, 1907–1939” provides transcriptions only with no images.
- “Bremen Select Passenger Departure Lists, 1904 [sic?]-1914 is based on the handwritten transcriptions mentioned above.

Birth, Marriage & Death Records

Ancestry has a few databases covering a broad geographical area and many more covering individual states and territories, as well as individual towns. One should keep in mind that databases covering Lutheran records commonly include other Protestants.

Other databases

Ancestry has many databases in the following categories: Census & Voters Lists; Directories & Membership Lists; Military, Reference, Dictionaries & Almanacs; Schools, Directories & Church Histories; Stories, Memories & Histories; Wills, Probates, Land, Tax & Criminal.

Finding Appropriate Records to Search

- Use Ancestry's "card catalog" to search for records specific to a village, parish, *Standesamt* location, state, or territory
- If your German-speaking ancestors did not live in Germany, search on the name of the country or region where they lived, "Banat," for example.
- Use the large databases offering vital record information
- Read the "Source information" and "About" sections of each database for scope and other important information.
- Names of people and places are sometimes difficult to search because of spelling and indexing issues. Use the asterisk (*) wildcard and try variant spellings.

Ancestry Library Edition databases and websites mentioned in this presentation

Bavaria, Germany, WWI Personnel Rosters, 1914-1918
Bremen, Germany, Military Lists, 1712-1914
Bremen, Germany, Passenger Lists Index, 1907-1939
Bremen Select Passenger Departure Lists, 1904-1914
Halle (Saale), Germany, Military Recruitment Lists, 1828-1888
Geographisches Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs
Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1518-1921
Germany, Lutheran Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, 1500-1971
Germany, Select Marriages, 1558-1929
Germany, Select Births and Baptisms, 1558-1898
Germany, Westfalen, Minden Citizen Lists, 1574-1902
Grevesmühlen, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Germany, Street List, c. 1910
Hamburg passenger lists, 1850-1934
Hamburg Passenger Lists, Handwritten Indexes, 1855-1934
Lübeck, Germany, Census

Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs
Mühldorf, Germany, Deeds, 1300-1873
New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957
Ortslexikon des Kantons Zürich
Weimar, Germany, Lists of Citizens, 1542-1919
Weimar, Germany, Lists of Citizens, 1542-1919
Schwäbisch Hall, Germany, Wills, Probates, and Marriage Contracts, 1503-1949
Schwäbisch Hall, Germany, Wills, Probates, and Marriage Contracts, 1503-1949
Straubing, Bavaria, Germany, Miscellaneous City Records, 1765-1917

Websites

Bremen Passenger Lists (Staatsarchiv Bremen):
<http://www.passengerlists.de/>
Gefallenendenkmäler [War casualty memorial database]:
<http://www.denkmalprojekt.org/>
Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs:
<https://www.meyersgaz.org/index.aspx>