

Common symbols and abbreviations used in *Ortssippenbücher* and other German genealogical sources

*	Date of birth
R	Baptismal date
∞	Marriage
∞ I	First marriage. Other Roman numerals following the symbol (which are sometimes in parenthesis) indicate successive marriages: ∞ II, ∞ III, etc.
o/o	Divorced (<i>geschieden</i>)
o—o	Unmarried couple
+	Death date
■	Date of burial
#	Date of burial
*+	Died on day of birth
+*	Stillborn
o	Confirmation
acath.	Non-Catholic (<i>acatholicus</i>)
erw.	Mentioned (<i>erwähnt</i>)
ev. / evg. / evang.	Protestant
gef.	Fallen person (<i>Gefallen</i>), indicates someone killed in battle
isr.	Jewish (<i>Israelisch</i>)
jüd.	Jewish (<i>jüdisch</i>)
ledig	Single, unmarried
luth	Lutheran
N.N.	Name unknown (<i>nomen necio</i>)
rk, kath.	Roman Catholic
so.	Son (<i>Sohn</i>)
s.v. / s.d.	Son of (<i>Sohn von / des</i>)
to.	Daughter (<i>Tochter</i>)
t.v. / t.d.	Daughter of (<i>Tochter von / des</i>)
Wwe.	Widow
Wwer.	Widower

Figure 3

soldiers who died while serving in the military. Some of them include lists of emigrants from the village with their destinations.

Typically the biggest difficulty in using the *Ortssippenbücher* comes not from the books themselves but rather discerning the town or village where the family originated in Germany. As with all European research, if the town is unknown, it is impossible to proceed. With *Ortssippenbücher*, if the researcher does not know the name of the town there will be no way to even determine if a book exists.

While a discourse on finding a village in Germany is well beyond the scope of this discussion, History & Genealogy staff members have come up with 18 sources for finding this crucial information:⁷

- Information provided by family members
- Family papers or artifacts
- Passenger lists
- Naturalization records
- U.S. church records (including marriage, death, and baptisms of immigrants' children)
- Birth records
- Civil marriage records
- Death registers and certificates
- Obituaries and death notices
- Wills and probate records
- Tombstone inscriptions
- World War I draft registration records
- U.S. Census records
- Published family histories and family trees found on the Internet
- U.S. Army Register of Enlistments, 1798–1914

(Ancestry database)

- Geographical surname sites
- Contemporary online telephone books
- Location-specific publications, such as *Men of Bern*, *The Alsace Emigration Book*, and *The Wuerttemberg Emigration Index*. See also “Passenger Lists and Other Sources Pertaining to 19th-Century German Emigration and Immigration (Bibliography)” on the library’s website.⁸