

Church Records

Prior to Government Issue of Birth, Marriage and Death records, churches recorded information about christenings, baptisms, marriages, and burials. Vast numbers of parish registers have been microfilmed from throughout the world and are being added to online collections at sites such as:

Ancestry.com

FamilySearch.org

Findmypast.com

MyHeritage.com

... and elsewhere.

These ecclesiastical records can extend your family history research further back before civil registrations in many areas.

Church records were usually of baptisms (Taufen), not births, marriage (Heiraten), and burial services (Begrabnisse), not a death record. Baptisms records would usually indicate the date of birth, but if not, you could assume that the baptism took place just a few days after birth. Burial services records most times gave the age of the person, date of death, place of death, and if an alter services was given. Other types of records the church might have kept were confirmations (Konfirmationen) which was done about the age of 14, communions, family registers (Familienbucher) or lists of its members, account records (such as for fees for special masses), and pastor lists.

To obtain the church vital records (Kirchenbucher), you will have to write (in German) to the town church, or local parish, that your ancestor came from. Smaller towns and churches may have moved their records to a larger city's central archive, so you'll have to determine where the records are now being stored.

There are 27 Catholic Church Archives in Germany. You should write the Catholic archive in the largest city near your town.

The National Headquarters of the Catholic Church is:

Sekretariat der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz

Kaiserstrasse 163

53773 Bonn

General

- https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Church_Records
- [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany,_Prussia,_Pomerania_Church_Records_\(FamilySearch_Historical_Records\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany,_Prussia,_Pomerania_Church_Records_(FamilySearch_Historical_Records))
- http://www.genealoger.com/german/ger_church_records.htm
- <http://www.kath.de/>
- <https://blog.eogn.com/2014/09/21/german-digital-church-book-portal-is-now-online/>
- <http://hcgsohio.org/cpage.php?pt=87>
- <http://www.raogk.org/church-records/>

Church records are a rich resource for the genealogical and historical researcher. In many parts of States, church records predate civil records. They therefore document vital events, giving birth, marriage, and death information that might otherwise be lost. Besides providing names and dates, church records may reveal relationships between people and depict a family's status in the community. In addition, entries of a personal nature are not uncommon, and these can offer a glimpse into an ancestor's character or habits.

Before County and city governments collected vital records, many people recorded important dates, events, and names in their family Bible. Family Bibles are valuable research tools. Although the dates cannot be guaranteed, Family Bibles are a tangible link with past generations.

When there are no civil registrations of birth, marriage and death records, church records can serve as alternative sources for these vital records.

Although there are a lot of different records that you can use to research family history and genealogy, church records tend to contain a lot of the best information. One reason for that is that many states didn't require vital statistics to be recorded at the state level until long after they were settled. So, you may have much better luck looking up a birth, death, or marriage record in church records, especially if you are looking for a record that predates state recording

German-Specific

- <http://www.genealogycenter.org/pathfinders/guides/German.aspx>
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Beginning_German_Research
- http://www.stemwedegenealogy.com/understanding_german_church_records.htm Baptism & Marriage
- <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/list#page=1&countryId=1927074>
- <http://blog.ancestorcloud.com/2016/01/05/genealogy-in-germany-church-records/>
- <http://www.genealogyforum.com/gfaol/resource/German/church.htm>
- http://search.ancestry.co.uk/Places/Europe/Germany/Default.aspx?geo_a=r&geo_s=uk&geo_t=uk&geo_v=2.0.0&o_iid=41012&o_lid=41012&o_sch=Web+Property
- <http://www.genealogytoday.com/articles/reader.mv?ID=691>
- <http://www.thefhguide.com/project-4-germany.html>
- <http://www.genealogicalstudies.com/eng/correspondence-courses.asp?courseID=227>
- http://familytreewebinars.com/download.php?webinar_id=245
- <http://stevemorse.org/fhl/websiteslist.php?file=weblinkseastern>
- <http://www.freesurnamesearch.com/search/germany.html>
- <http://www.kentonlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/German-Genealogy-Resources.pdf>
- <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/330310953900072262/>