

G-SIG FORUM #34

...from the German Special Interest Group. G-SIG is an effort of the St. Louis Genealogical Society (www.stlgs.org/) and the German American Heritage Society, St. Louis, Mo. (www.gahs-stlouis.org).

This communication is a forum for genealogical, educational, and historical information with fresh insights and ideas on German traditions and ancestry. Gerald Perschbacher, Group Leader for G-SIG, serves as *FORUM* compiler and coordinator.

If you would like to include a notice or request, please submit your information in condensed form for the *EXCHANGE!* section (limit 50 words). *Exchange!* notices run only once, but you may resubmit. We reserve the privilege to shorten and edit. Send your *EXCHANGE!* submission to persch3@hotmail.com.

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Anatomy of a Name

By Gerald Perschbacher

Dennis Florreich (dflorr@bellsouth.net) in Florida has been wondering about his surname. After consulting with one researcher, he concluded the name was French. While that may be true, I suggested he study the surname a bit more. I surmised it could be German!

It was time to hit the books. This is what was uncovered:

FLORICH is a name used in the Lower Rhine area.

FLORKE is a related version, meaning "up the Florick" near Viersen (used in 1460 A.D.; Viersen is in the area of Westphalia). It comes from the word FLOR which means a body of water. The name has been used in The Netherlands.

FLOCKE is related, and appears in Lower Germany. It is short for SAINT FLORENTINUS, a martyr in the Lower Rhine. There was a saying, "All Deutschman are called Florentz."

You might think that since there is no R in FLOCKE that it could not be related. However, German pronunciation rolls the R in a soft manner, which sometimes is hard to hear. In certain cases, it would almost be silent. Hence, a word can be in common with another, regardless of the R.

FLORY: used in upper Germany, short for SAINT FLORIAN (the patron saint of upper Austria, who protected against fires).

FLORENTZ, FLORKE, FLOHR, and FLORICH were found on pages 126-127 of the book *Dictionary of German Names* by Hans Bahlow, translated by Edda Gentry, Max Kade Institute, University of Wisconsin, Madison. This book is considered a major source for name studies.

In another book, I found the reference to FLORSCHUTZ.

You can study more about this in the book *German-American Names* by George F. Jones, Genealogical Pub. Co., 1001 N. Calvert St., Baltimore, MD 21202.

With the same idea in mind, FLORSHEIM (a German city) could translate as "FIELD-HOME." So FLOR can be a German word and may not have any strong connection to French.

I obtained both copies of these books at Barnes & Noble. You might find them at a local library or through the reference section of a genealogical society.

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Tips Shared at :

germanspecialinterest@yahoogroups.com

More and more participants in G-SIG are sharing their questions, thoughts, and ideas on German heritage and lineage at the site shown above. Here are some highlights gleaned from recent comments.

“If you can find (your ancestor) in the 1870 census this may tell you what area of Germany he came from (i.e. Bavaria, Baden, etc.). Germany wasn't (called) Germany until 1871,” so knowing the region could narrow your search.

“Definitely search the passport applications available on Ancestry.com,” was one suggestion. The person had discovered the arrival of an ancestor in America, but it was based on a ship's list and knowing the ancestor's age around the time of arrival. “The name in the ship's passenger list was spelled slightly different...I found a passport application for this same relative where he went back to Germany to visit in the early 1890s, and the passport application asked for things like the date he first came to America, the ship he came on, and these correlated exactly to the ship's passenger list (guess he had a good memory as it was about 50 years after he had emigrated to America).” The application gave

specifics about his destination in Prussia, which was likely to have been his former home.

“Check church records. A lot of German pastors would put the town or village in the records when recording a marriage or baptism. See if he left a will, they may have left something to someone still in Germany.” This happened to the person’s great-great-grandmother who named the town and street address.

“After 1892, you could check www.ellisland.org. A lot of people forget to check this because they think their people came years before, but they may have gone back to visit and you can find them their and possibly their passport.”

“If you think your ancestor came from Baden (or even if not, check anyway) try looking at this emigrant database: www.auswanderer-bw.de . I found that marriages of family members in church records frequently listed the place of birth of the bride and groom, down to the village....This database is a collection of people from that area that emigrated away. If you find those you think are your ancestors, e-mail the archives and order the emigrant file. I just recently got (several pages) for my family. I can recognize who came, birthdates, etc. Have you ever seen the series of books called 'Germans to America' that are a list of German emigrants? These books are usually located in libraries...that have a genealogy department.”

“Look at German-language newspapers for an obituary.”

One participant noted what is available on microfilm from the Latter Day Saints (LDS) Mormon church:

Place

Germany, Preußen, Hessen-Nassau, Biedenkopf

Topics

Germany, Preußen, Hessen-Nassau, Biedenkopf - Church records, Civil Registration, Guardianship, Probate Records, and Public records

“You also can try this website: <http://www.ekd.de> . This is supposed to be a portal to all the web sites of various Lutheran synods in Germany.’

In summary, good progress is being made as G-SIG participants pool their knowledge and experiences. You can be among them!

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Checking Military Records Overseas

When it comes to military information, M. Gordon Seyffert (gordonseyffert@mac.com) has made progress online. Here's what I mean.

He says, "Volume III of the 2000 reprint of *Meyers Orts-* gives the garrison towns for regiments of the German army as of just before WWI, but what if you need similar information for the period of the Napoleonic Wars? I just recently discovered a new 3rd GGF who was a corporal in the Saxon infantry, 1807-14.

His company commander's name was referenced whenever he was named in his town's church books, and by keeping an eye out for other military men in the town's vital statistics, I could be fairly sure he was part of a line infantry regiment.

"Finally, I spotted a reference to a regiment name in the same records, but could I be sure it was the right regiment for the town? A Google search on the regiment's name initially turned up a lot of fairly useless references to war-gaming, but by persisting on to the less popular hits, I finally found some worthwhile information. And the one that shows the Napoleonic period garrison towns for Electoral Saxony & the later Kingdom of Saxony is the German version of Wikipedia's page on the Saxon army (scroll towards the bottom):

http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/S%C3%A4chsische_Armee

"In my own research I was especially lucky. I found that the 'Prinz Clemens' regiment of infantry has been the focus of a small band of re-enactors -- focused, however, on the Seven Years' War instead (although the uniforms are much the same until 1810). So there are plenty of pictures, at:

<http://www.regimentprinzclemens.de/>

"Independently, I found this group had received press coverage, which was also a nice extra: <http://www.mz-web.de/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=ksta/page&atype=ksArtikel&aid=1189423926172&openMenu=1121028317612,1168601613563&calledPageId=1168601613563&listid=1168601613579>

"Europeans enjoy military re-enactment, too, I find. A German Civil War relative's heavily-French-German New York infantry regiment is honored with a Web page from (You guessed it!) France, in (of course) French (but with some English translation). It figures, as the uniforms they wore for the first year were modeled on the French army, included capes, and were powder-blue instead of Federal-blue!"

I responded: “Thanks, Gordon, for some enlightening information and ‘good process.’ There is another angle, too, for those of Hessen origin. The Count of Hanau set up the town of Pirmasens to be his military capital. He literally built the town and equipped his new army, then drilled and drilled them to make them pretty impressive. No doubt there are other towns like this in Germany, especially along the Rhine, since this was an area that was vulnerable to invasion. Seekers of information may be able tap into old files that date back to the 1700s by finding such sites.” **GP**

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EXCHANGE! *G-SIG comments, ideas, & requests:*

+ **G-SIG Clusters** are “where the action is”! Meet and communicate with others who have similar aims in research and information. Learn from them. Share your successes. For details on existing Clusters, or to explore the formation of a new Cluster, contact Lisa at lmclaughlin@polsinelli.com) or Kathy at kathyinwashington@hotmail.com).

+ **Check** <http://www.library.wisc.edu/etext/ravenstein/> (suggests John Maurath, who got the information from Tina Kutschbach, a volunteer at the Ross County, Ohio). The site features a map of Germany from the late 1800s. You can enlarge the map and use an index to find towns.

+ **Jeff Gottschalk** (reliv4u@rogers.com) is seeking information about his great-grandfather who went back to visit in Baden Baden.

+ **Don’t forget those book sales!** Just about any time of the year is a good time to watch for special annual used book sales or estate sales. Look for books that explain German culture, history and immigration. Watch for historical atlases of Europe and Germany that trace border changes over the years.

+ **Terry at** Terry.Mueller@worldnet.att.net **is searching his ancestry** on his paternal side from Oyten, Germany. “I am creating a family tree that goes back to my grandfather who came to the U.S. as a young man (17), about 1884. I have no other information about him before then, other than he was born in Hanover, Germany, in 1867. I would like to know_more.”

+ **“glofran”** (gcingano@sbcglobal.net) **asks**, “I am attempting to find church records for a George Dreher, born 1836 in Biedenkopf, Hesse. I know from other

information that I have that he was Evangelical, but I don't know if it was Evangelical Reformed or Evangelical Lutheran.”

+ Researching your ancestry in America? Seek a copy of the county history.

Seems like most counties in the Midwest produced a hardbound history as early as the 1870s and these often were reprinted or placed online. Names of key families (among pioneers) often are listed. For details, contact local libraries, historical societies, or genealogical societies.

+ “My husband's family is from the Red Bud, Ill., area (Monroe & Randolph counties). What information do you have on the people that lived there? When they came to America in 1832, their name was spelled Heil. It seems that once they arrived in Illinois, they spelled it Heyl,” says Megan Heyl, who lives in Holland, Mich. (jester1380@chartermi.net).

+ Wanted: documents & books on Germans and German settlers who entered the field of automobile production. Wanted for research. **Also interested in old German atlases.** Contact Gerald Perschbacher at persch3@hotmail.com .

+++++Want a printed copy of G-SIG FORUM by mail? Send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: St. Louis Genealogical Society, Attn. Ed Schmidt; #4 Sunnen Dr., Suite 140; St. Louis, MO 63143. **Not yet on the e-mail list for the G-SIG FORUM?** Write to patvonzurm@msn.com . (Note: All copyright privileges for this FORUM are reserved by the compiler; no item is to be duplicated or distributed without permission.)

+++++Have great ideas for the G-SIG FORUM? Submit your material to persch3@hotmail.com or mail it to: StLGS, Attn: G-SIG, #4 Sunnen Dr., Suite 140, St. Louis, MO 63143.