Handout for "Free Websites for German Genealogy" Program
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FamilySearch.org
- Not all records have been made searchable; always check the Catalog (https://www.familysearch.org/en/search/catalog)
- Make sure to also check "Full Text" Search on FamilySearch Labs (familysearch.org/en/labs/)
- Has many German civil vital records
  - i.e., "Personenstandsregister," "Standesamtsregister," "Zivilstandsregister"
  - Or, more specifically, "Geburts-," "Heiraten-," or "Sterbenregister"
- Has a moderate amount of German church records
  - Not as extensive Protestant holdings as the paid website www.Archion.de

Matricula
- Access at data.matricula-online.eu/en/ or just google "Matricula"
- Primarily German Catholic church records (baptisms, marriages, burials)

JewishGen.org
- All records free
- Advanced search capabilities are restricted without a $100 donation
  - Site is still very usable in free mode

CompGen (Genealogy.net)
- Especially their wiki (wiki.genealogy.net) which includes, most notably:
  - Adressbücher (address books)
  - GEDBAS (family tree database)
  - GOV (historic geo information system)
  - Grabsteine (gravestones)

Geography sites
- CompGen's GOV database (aforementioned)
- Meyers Gazetteer
  - Access at www.meyersgaz.org/
  - NOTE: Must include the "www." due to this website's DNS configuration
- Google Maps / Google Earth
  - Access at google.com/maps and earth.google.com
- Old Maps Online
  - Access at oldmapsonline.org

Deciphering old German vocabulary
- German Genealogical Word List
  - Go to familysearch.org/en/wiki/German_Genealogical_Word_List
- Grimm's Wörterbuch (German Dictionary by the Brothers Grimm)
  - Go to woerterbuchnetz.de/?sigle=DWB
  - or google "digitale Grimm" and then click the blue "Online-Wörterbuch" button
  - If you don't read German, can copy a dictionary entry from the online Grimm Dictionary and paste it into Google Translate (translate.google.com)
- Video tutorials on how to read old German script:
  - https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/lessons/old-german-script-part-1
  - https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/lessons/old-german-script-part-2
  - https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/lessons/old-german-script-german-church-and-civil-records-part-3

Civil Vital Records
- Generally cover 1870s through early 1900s. Sometimes start earlier (some regions started keeping civil vital records in the 1840s-1850s, some during the Napoleonic era of the 1810s, some back in 1790s).

Personenstandsregister	Personen	stands	register
	Persons	*status*	*register*
Standesamtsregister	Standes	amts	register
	Status	*district office*	*register*
Standesbücher	Standes	bücher	
	Status	*books*	
Zivilstandsregister	Zivil	stands	register
	Civil	*status*	*register*

<u>Birth registers</u>
Geburts-, Geburten-   -register   (example: *Geburtsregister*)

<u>Marriage registers</u>
Heirats-, Heiraten-, Trau- -register   (example: *Heiratsregister*)

<u>Death registers</u>
Sterbe-, Sterbeneben-, Toten- -register   (example: *Totenregister*)

<u>Duplicate registers</u> (duplicated copies of the originals)
-neben- (literally translates to "next to")
For instance:

Sterbe	neben	register	(example: *Sterbenebenregister*)
Death	*duplicate*	*register*	

Individual documents are called: Akten, Dokumente, or Urkunden
(example: *Geburtsakten* or *Sterbenurkunden*)

Specific websites for German states' civil vital records:
- Baden-Württemberg
  - Index for North Baden:
    https://www2.landesarchiv-bw.de/ofs21/olf/struktur.php?bestand=12390
  - Index for South Baden:
    https://www2.landesarchiv-bw.de/ofs21/olf/struktur.php?bestand=10028
- Bayern (Bavaria) - not being digitized online for free by the state yet; may find a handful on FamilySearch.org
- Brandenburg
  - Indexes:
    https://www.stadt-brandenburg.de/bildung/stadtarchiv/personenstand#c26994
- Bremen
  - Indexes: https://die-maus-bremen.info/index.php?id=473
    - *Die Maus* is a good website to quickly search transcribed indexes of vital records
    - And *Die Maus* is great for all things related to Bremen-area genealogy! Some of their resources are free, some are behind a paywall.
  - Full Sources:
    https://www.arcinsys.niedersachsen.de/arcinsys/detailAction.action?detailid=b15665
    - Note: Niedersachsen-Bremen - has a joint Arcinsys (archival information system) where they are digitizing all their vital records from 1876 through the early 1900s)
- Hamburg
  - Birth indexes:
    https://www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/behoerden/behoerde-fuer-kultur-und-medien/332-5-standesaemter-generalregister-geburten-111054
  - Marriage indexes:
    https://www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/behoerden/behoerde-fuer-kultur-und-medien/332-5-standesaemter-generalregister-heiraten-111056
  - Death indexes:
    https://www.hamburg.de/politik-und-verwaltung/behoerden/behoerde-fuer-kultur-und-medien/332-5-standesaemter-generalregister-sterbefaelle-111058
- Hesse
  - Full Sources: https://arcinsys.hessen.de/arcinsys/start
- Mecklenburg-Vorpommern - not being digitized online for free by the state yet; may find a handful on FamilySearch.org
- Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony)
  - Full Sources:
    https://www.arcinsys.niedersachsen.de/arcinsys/detailAction.action?detailid=b15665

- - - Also includes Bremen civil vital records
  - Nordrhein-Westfalen (North Rhine-Westphalia)
    - Full Sources: https://www.archive.nrw.de/landesarchiv-nrw/geschichte-erfahren/familienforschung/familienforschung-digital
  - Rheinland-Pfalz (Rhineland-Palatinate)
    - Full Sources: https://apertus.rlp.de/
  - Saarland - not being digitized online for free by the state yet; may find a handful on FamilySearch.org
  - Sachsen (Saxony)
    - Indexes: https://www.erzgebirgskreis.de/landratsamt-service/buergerservice/kreisarchiv-und-historisches-archiv/personenstandsregister-namensverzeichnisse
  - Sachsen-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt) - not being digitized online for free by the state yet; may find a handful on FamilySearch.org
  - Schleswig-Holstein - not being digitized online for free by the state yet; may find a handful on FamilySearch.org
  - Thüringen (Thuringia) - not being digitized online for free by the state yet; may find a handful on FamilySearch.org

Arcinsys websites
  - Some German states have Arcinsys (archival information system) websites.
  - To find digitized objects on an Arcinsys site:
    - 1. Click "Search" near the top of the site
    - 2. Click "Extended Search" in the drop-down menu
    - 3. Insert keywords in the "Search words" field(s)
      - Can search by town name, and/or source type, and/or even an individual person's name (can't find an individual's name in a vital records register, but can find documents if the individual had something like a legal/criminal/tax document generated about them
    - 4. Will usually want to check the "Only objects with digital copies" checkbox
      - Sometimes a data entry without a digital object associated with it will have usable information, but often it's just metadata
    - 5. Click the blue "Search" button
    - 6. Click the red "Show details page" for any desired source

German military records online
  - Hessian subsidy troops (1700s) - e.g., used by Britain in American Revolution
    - Visit https://www.lagis-hessen.de/en/subjects/index/sn/hetrina
    - Or google "Hessian Troops in America"
  - Nazi era military records (1930-40s)
    - Visit the Arolsen Archives website: https://arolsen-archives.org/en/

German newspapers digitized online
- Deutsches Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library)
  - Visit: https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/newspaper
- Regional databases:
  - Running list kept by CompGen: https://wiki.genealogy.net/Digitale_historische_Tageszeitungen
  - Examples:
    - Bayern (Bavaria): https://digipress.digitale-sammlungen.de/
    - Berlin: https://zefys.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/list/
    - Hamburg: https://zeitungen.sub.uni-hamburg.de/
    - Nordrhein-Westfalen (North Rhine-Westphalia): https://zeitpunkt.nrw/
    - The above list is not comprehensive. Just a few examples. There are way too many to list here!
  - There are always new newspaper digitization projects coming online. Search for others by googling the name of the town/city, district/region, or state + the word "Zeitungen" (German word for 'newspapers')

Google Books
- Google Books is in the process of digitizing out-of-copyright books (including German-language books), mostly from 100 years ago or older
  - Visit books.google.com

Emailing German archives through their websites
- If it is one document you are requesting, and you know the exact name/date, many (though not all) German archives will do a single simple lookup request for free
  - Confirm with the archive if they intend to charge any fees before you place the lookup request
- If you are fuzzy on some of the details and it would require them to actually do research to find the document (i.e., not just a simple document retrieval), then you will be charged
- Basic word for archive is "Archiv," and it is often combined with prefix like "Staats-" (state–civil), "Stadt-" (city–civil), "Landes-" (region-civil), or "Landeskirchliches" (region–ecclesiastical)
- Emails are almost always sufficient these days, no need to spend money on postage
- Most German archives can work with emails in English, but might not be a bad idea to also copy and paste a Google Translated German version of your message into the email as well

Google Translate (especially the mobile app!)
- Visit: translate.google.com
- And download Google Translate on your mobile phone from the app store

For further questions, contact us at: genealogy@slcl.org
Or visit: https://www.slcl.org/research-learn/genealogy