

# **German Church Records and Beyond**

Jilline Maynes

## **Objectives**

1. Become familiar with church records, citizenship books, and town lineage books
2. Understand the information that can be found in the record sets
3. Know how to access the record sets

## **Church Records (Kirchenbücher)**

- o Most valuable record set prior to nationwide German civil registration in 1876
- o 1524 – Earliest surviving records are Lutheran books from Nürnberg
- o 1650 – Most Catholic & Protestant parishes kept church records
- o Provided primary vital information

## **Information found in church records**

- o Baptism/Birth, Marriage, Death/Burial
- o Parentage & town of origin
- o Confirmation
- o Family registers

Additional information will also be found in church records

For more information about church records, see the link to the FS Wiki article:

[https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany\\_Church\\_Records](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Church_Records)

## **Accessibility**

Family History Library - microfilm

- o FS Catalog - search by *place* - enter town of interest
- o Look for & click on church records

Online

- o FamilySearch Online Historical Record Collections
- o Germany Births and Baptisms, 1558-1898

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1473000?collectionNameFilter=false>

- o Germany Marriages, 1558-1929

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1473009?collectionNameFilter=false>

- o Germany Deaths and Burials, 1582-1958

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1494474?collectionNameFilter=false>

Online

- o Ancestry.com
- o Some church records have been digitized, see the following link.

[http://search.ancestry.com/search/cardcatalog.aspx#ccat=hc=25&dbSort=1&sbo=1&title=&keyword=German%20church%20records&filter=1\\*1652381%7C0\\*34&](http://search.ancestry.com/search/cardcatalog.aspx#ccat=hc=25&dbSort=1&sbo=1&title=&keyword=German%20church%20records&filter=1*1652381%7C0*34&)

Online Protestant church records

Archion.de - \$ website, but can browse to see if your church records are online

<https://www.archion.de/>

### **Citizenship Books (Bürgerbücher)**

- o Date from 13th to mid-19th Century

#### **Citizenship**

- o Granted to individuals by towns
- o Required fee & given rights

#### **Information found in citizenship records**

- o Name, birthplace, age, occupation, relationships
- o Date of citizenship & fees

#### **Accessibility**

Family History Library - microfilm

- o FS Catalog - search by *place* - enter town of interest
- o Look for & click on Naturalization and citizenship

Online at FamilySearch

Sampling of digitized citizenship books & likely more available online.

- o Bautzen, Sachsen

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1967764?collectionNameFilter=false>

- o Köthen, Anhalt

<https://familysearch.org/search/image/index?owc=MHJ4-GZ9%3A347617601%3Fcc%3D2040151>

- o Nördlingen, Bayern

<https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-91SG-9ZVZ?mode=g&wc=M61Y-PM7%3A241200501&cc=1941333>

For more information about citizenship, see *The German Research Companion* by Riemer, et al. and the FS Wiki article [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany\\_Naturalization\\_and\\_Citizenship](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Naturalization_and_Citizenship)

### **Town Lineage Books (Ortsfamilienbücher)**

- o Often compiled by 1-3 people
- o Organized by families using a numbering system

Books contain

- o Names & vital information
- o Relationships - parents, spouses, & children
- o Occupations

- o Towns of Origin

Additional information may also be found

### **Accessibility**

#### Family History Library

- o FS Catalog - search by *place* - enter town of interest
- o Look for & click on genealogy

#### Online

Association for Computer Genealogy - <http://ofb.genealogy.net/>

- o Free online town lineage books
- o Scroll list or enter town of interest in search box

#### Published Copies

- o Google the book
- o Contact local genealogy society
- o Contact town & inquire through their website
- o For a fee, may receive printed or digital format