Researching Ancestors in Alsace & Baden & Pfalz

So, why do you think they were from Europe?

Learn some European/French/German history

Study Germanic Genealogy

Learn basic vocabulary of Latin & Germanic records

Establish the critical link (when & where)

Get more clues from European sites

Get help



Oberlauterbach (Alsace)

Introduction

Prior to about 1800, about 3/8 of my ancestors resided in small villages outside of Karlsruhe, roughly within the rectangular area shown here, on both sides of the Rhein/Rhine River. The area includes parts of Alsace, Pfalz, and Baden.

With the benefit of hindsight, I present some thoughts based on experiences that I have had while researching ancestors from northern Baden, northeast France (Bas-Rhin, Alsace), and Pfalz. Some of what follows may be unique to my research, but the techniques and approaches used might help you with your own research. As you consider what follows, I suggest that you keep in mind the following three maxims.

- Be analytic & keep notes
- Be inventive & agile
- Seek advice from experts



1734 Theatrum Bell ad Rhenum Superior:

https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1 ~281723~90054558:Theatrum-Belli-ad-Rhenum-Superior-?sort =Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2C Series_No&qvq=w4s:/where%2FRhine%2BRiver;sort:Pub_List_No_InitialSort%2CPub_Date%2CPub_List_No%2CSeries_No;Ic:RUMSEY~8~1&mi=26&trs=29

Contemporary map: https://goo.gl/maps/P5wbHKjN56EBnjyy

Disclaimer

- What I share here is specific to the research that I have been doing. I don't expect that it will all apply to your research, but I hope that it gives ideas that can help in your own research.
- My focus has been on 17th and 18th centuries.

So, why do you think they were from Europe?

- Assemble the evidence. Your work, the work of others. Make sure that you can defend the conclusions. Think like Sherlock (or Sheldon, whichever suites you).
- Example: Johannes Rombs & family 1900 census & ship manifest -

Dings of blath of such support	NATIVITY.	need of horn in the Unite		
States, give the State	and parents of each person enur or Territory; if of foreign birth,	give the Country only.		
Place of birth of this Penson.	Place of birth of FATHER of this person.	Place of birth of Mornes of this person.		
13	14	-15		
Russia	Russia	Germany		
Southe Datema	Russia	Germany		

"United States Census, 1900," database with images, FamilySearch (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MMRQ-N42)



So, why do you think they were from Europe?

Copy of a ship's manifest follows.

"New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1891," database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVSV-3FB5 : 20 February 2021), Johannes Rums, 1884; citing Immigration, New York City, New York, United States, NARA microfilm publication M237 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, n.d.), FHL microfilm 1,027,349.



So, why do you think they were from Europe?

Johann Georg Lay (a.k.a. John Loy) – 1860 census

"United States Census, 1860", database with images, *FamilySearch* (https://familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:MCGN-LRN: 18 February 2021), John Loy, 1860.

5		DESCRIPTION.				VALUE OF ESTATE OWNED.			
visitation.	The name of every person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1860, was in this family.		Sex. Sex. Supering the sext of the sext o		Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each person, male and female, over 15 years of age.	Value of Real Estate.		Place of Birth, Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	
•	3	4	5	6	7	/ 8	9	10	
6	John Lou	39	20		Carpenter V	115	60	Baden	
	Suxama,	16	1					Renw.	
	Sohn "	12	n					Baden	
	Cathanie,	9	of					Do	
	mary "	3	of					Chie	
	Christana "	3	f	1				Do	
	Samuel "	1	n					Do	

Learn some history -European/French/German

There are many references, but I found the following first example to have just the right level of detail for a starting point. This is a messy period in history from my point of view.

Example: The Shortest History of Germany, James M. Hawes - https://hclib.bibliocommons.com/v2/record/S109C5870112

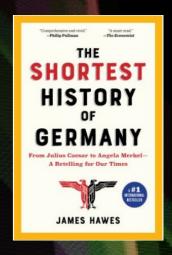
Probably you'll want to understand 17th and/or 18th century European history. Again, there are LOTS of references. Pick one that suits you. I liked the following oldie because it hit the period I was researching.

Example: Eighteenth Century Europe the 1680s to 1815, by Stuart Andrews.

Example: The Cambridge Illustrated History of France, by Colin Jones, ISBN 0521432944.

Example: German History Maps I (https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e9cb1f0b7c9342498eebbfdc7bf5cf75)

. . . and lots of on-line sources of varying extent and quality.



Historical Maps Can Help

- 1701-1774 maps: http://www.emersonkent.com/maps_by_year_from_1701.htm
- 1710 Alsace: https://uu.georeferencer.com/maps/e67534a0-5404-5926-a3fd-ed91c33 1fe05/
- 1610 Germany: https://maps.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/ward_1912/germany_religious_1610.jpg
- 1648 Europe: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/83/HRR_1648.png
- 30 Years War: https://www.leo-bw.de/web/guest/kartenbasierte-suche/-/gisviewer-expert/voll/HABW_06_11c/3513161,%205404175/1
- German History: https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e9cb1f0b7c9342498eebbfdc7bf5cf 75

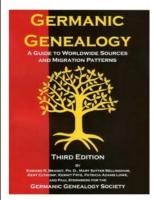
Study Germanic Genealogy

familysearch.org - wiki

- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Genealogy
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/German_Genealogical_Word_List
- https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany Finding Town of Origin

ggsmn.org

https://ggsmn.org/cpage.php?pt=41



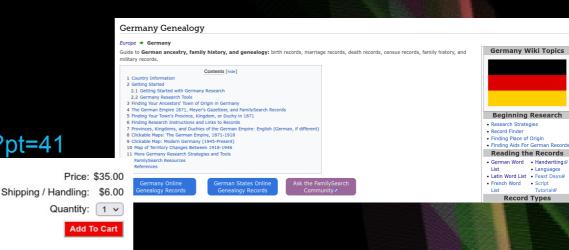
Germanic Genealogy: A Guide to Worldwide Sources and Migration Patterns, 3rd edition

A comprehensive 660-page handbook for Germanic family history researchers written and published by GGS. The book is highly recommended by librarians and

Take advantage of the reduced price for a limited time!

MEMBER PRICE is only \$27 but you must be logged in to get that price

[Located in Category: Books]



Languages

Record Types

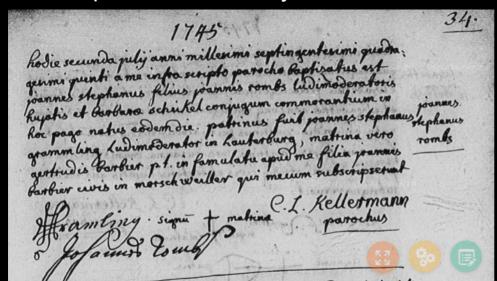


Study French Genealogy

- FamilySearch wiki
 - Overview: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/France_ Genealogy
 - Town of origin:
 https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/France_ Finding_Town_of_Origin
 - Etc.

Learn basic vocabulary of Latin & Germanic records

- Be aware of the many ways that Germanic names are corrupted by nonnative speakers. For examples: Loy/Lay, Rhombs/Rombs/Rums/Roms, Hydaker/Heidegger. Learn what consonants and vowels tend to be confused and/or interchanged (like F and V – Fetsch and Vetsch).
- Explore https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List
- Explore https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Languages
- Use an on-line or old-school Latin/English dictionary.
- Have a reference like this handy <u>Parish Register Latin</u>, C. Russell Jensen.
- Example of an unusually clear document follows.



2022

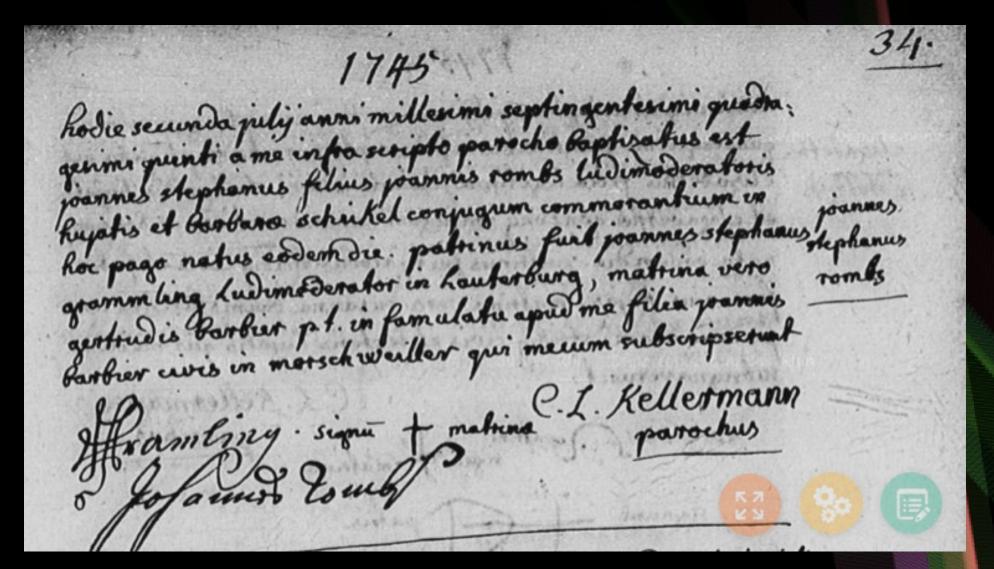
example is from

https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/deta il-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C343-P3-R207432#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C343-P3-R207432-2321 166

(a French site for an area where a Germanic dialect is common! This becomes understandable through study of history.)



Example

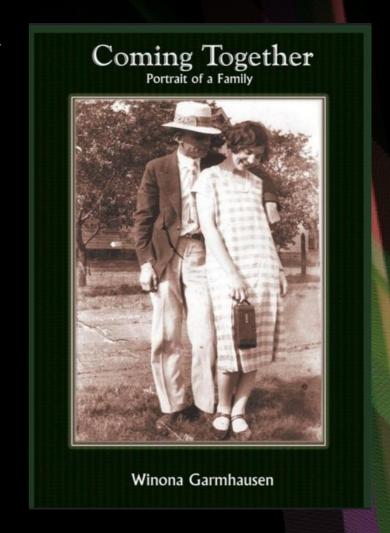


Establish the critical link

Where were they from in Europe and when were they there? Without this, it probably is impossible to proceed. If you are desperate, DNA testing might help, but probably not enough.

Examples:

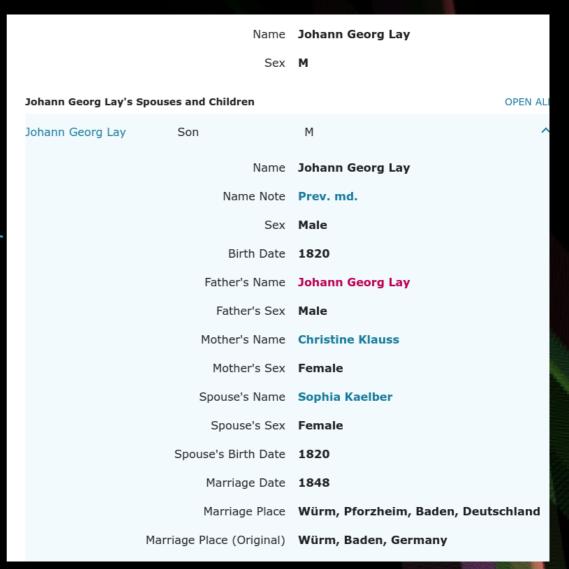
In the case of John Loy (a.k.a. Johann Lay), the critical link came from a book written by a lady that I found through genetic testing. Her book indicated that John had married a woman who had been married before (married name had been Sophia Hydaker(Heidegger)), maiden name was Kaelber.



Establish the critical link

From this I was able to find a marriage record in Baden, which led to birth records, etc.

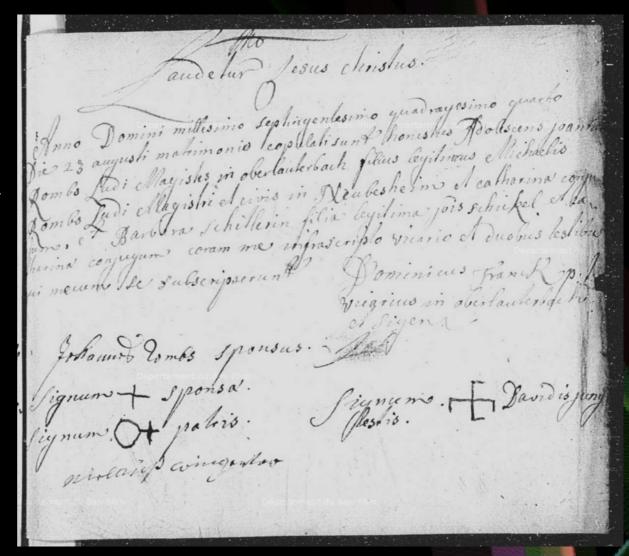
See "Deutschland Heiraten, 1558-1929", database, FamilySearch (https://www.familysearch.org/ar k:/61903/1:1:NZM5-926 : 13 July 2021), Johann Georg Lay in entry for Johann Georg Lay, 1848.



Establish the critical link

In the case of Johannes Rombs, I found a book (*Paradise on the Steppe*, Joseph S. Height) that indicated that his ancestors had come to Russia from Kesseldorf in Alsace. From there I was able to find a marriage record in Alsace of a direct line paternal ancestor that mentioned Neibsheim in Baden, which led to much more information.

Reference: Oberlauterbach - Registre de mariages 1729-1813 - 3 E 346/4 - page 21; https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/ETAT-CIVIL-C343-P3-R207435#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C343-P3-R207435-2321340



Get more clues from European sites

- Access on-line ortssippenbucher/orsfamilienbucher at Genealogy.net (https://ofb.genealogy.net/)
- See what others have done at a European genealogy site like https://en.geneanet.org/ .
- Use the marvelous Meyers Gazetteer to identify locations, including those that may hold records. - https://www.meyersgaz.org/

Example - Neibsheim:

https://ofb.genealogy.net/namelist.php?nachname=Von+Rhombs&ofb=neibsheim&modus=&lang=de



Get more clues from European sites

Example – Alsace; archives on-line-

https://archives.bas-rhin.fr /rechercher/documents-nu merises/registres-paroissi aux-et-documents-d-etat-c ivil/

NOTE: Access to the Bas-Rhin Archives site has recently been restricted to users in France only. I suggest that you use a VPN to appear to be working from France until (?) this situation changes. See https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Bas-Rhin,_France_Genealogy

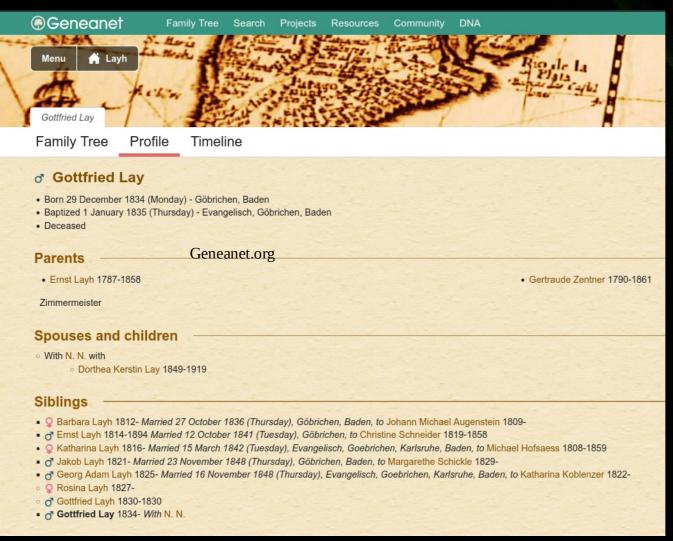


<u>@</u>_

Bas-Rhin Archives - note

- While the French site is inaccessible to people from outside France, in addition to the VPN work-around, you can try using the collection at FamilySearch.org.
 - Indexed: https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/4116416
 - And
 https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/334998?availab
 ility=Family+History+Library
 for the images
 - Images by village: https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/4116416
- Then, there is the AGAWE site: http://agawe-genealogie.com/?page_id=121

Get more clues from European sites



You can benefit from the work of others. You can also contact other researchers in France and Germany.

https://en.geneanet .org/

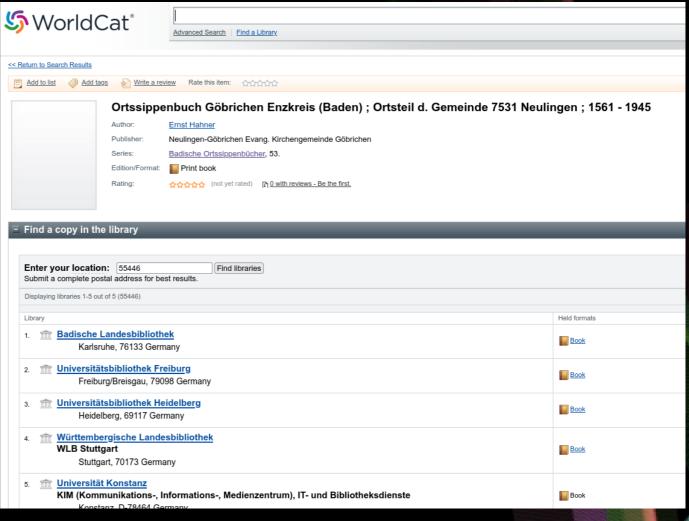
Use Worldcat

- Find other Ortssippenbucher that are not on genealogy.net by using https://www.worldcat.org/
 - (Librarians tend to be nice, helpful people, and they can help you get copies through interlibrary loan.)
 - Search based on names of locations
 - Look for more than OSB/OFB publications. You may find local histories as well.

Use Worldcat

Example - Worldcat & Göbrichen:

Use Worldcat.org & figure out how to contact a librarian, in this case at https://www.blb-karlsruhe.de/



Some Special Libraries

- St. Louis Co. Library (has lots of OSB/OFB books)
 - https://www.slcl.org/content/history-genealogy
 - https://www.slcl.org/content/ortssippenb%C3%B Ccher-familienb%C3%BCcher-held-history-and-g enealogy-department
- Allen Co. Public Library https://acpl.lib.in.us/genealogy
- HCLIB (interlibrary loan https://mnlink.org/)
 - Yale https://library.yale.edu/
 - Harvard https://hollis.harvard.edu/primo-explore/search?vid=HVD2&sortby=rank&lang=en_US

Example Ortssippenbuch

```
2223 Gottfried LAY (aus 2222), * Göb. 11.3.1712, ev., Bg. u.
     Zimmermann, ab 1753 Gerichtsmann/Gerichtsverwandter,
    † Göb. 20.5.1787, Schlagfluß,
    ∞I. Göb. 3.4.1736 Christina WOST (aus 3731), * Göb.
    25.12.1715, + Göb. 4.9.1743.
    @II. Göb. 26.7.1745 Elisabetha WOST (aus 3731).
     "seiner gewes Ehefr. leibliche Schwester", * Göb.
     16.9.1720, ev., + Göb. 16.12.1787.
     16 Kdr. in Göb. * u. ev. ~ :
     I. 1. Jacob * 9.2.1737, † Göb. 13.2.1737 -
          2. Anna Maria * 28.4.1738, Zw. (@ 2393) -
          3. Barbara * 28.4.1738, Zw. (@ 640) -
          4. Georg Adam * 16.12.1739 (V.: + in nordam.),
             am 4.5.1744 ausgewandert nach Waldoborough/
             Maine (USA) -
          5. Söhnlein * 26.8.1743, "nach empfangener Noth-
             taufe gleich balden gestorben: 9 Tg. hernach
             auch die Mutter" -
     II. 6. Georg Jacob * 10.5.1746, † Göb. 25.5.1746 -
          7. Catharina * 17.3.1748, Zw., + Göb. 3.4.1748 -
          8. Mädchen +* 18.3.1748, Zw. -
          9. Catharina * 5.9.1749, † Göb. 23.9.1749 -
         10. Georg Jacob * 30.11.1750, Pate 25.4.1777, led.
             (\infty 2226) -
         11. Katharina * 11.7.1752, † Göb. 9.12.1753 -
         12. Margaretha Barbara * 16.1.1755, † Göb. 12.4.1773 -
         13. Catharina * 20.1.1758, Zw., + Göb. 30.11.1761 -
         14. Margaretha Barbara * 20.1.1758, Zw., + Göb.
             28.1.1758 -
         15. Jacobina * 10.9.1759, † Göb. 8.10.1759 -
         16. Jacob Friderich * 3.3.1762, † Göb. 8.3.1762.
```

excerpt from Göbrichen Ortssippenbuch

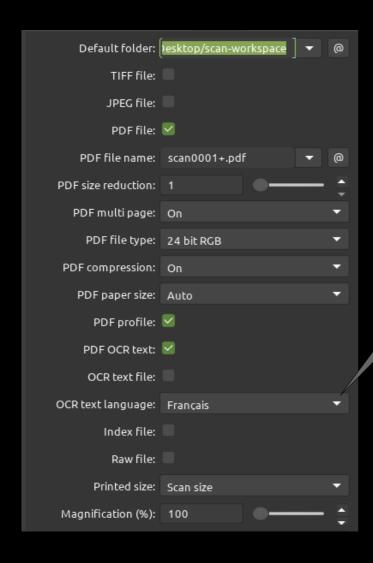
Find Books in Other Places

- https://books.google.com/ search based on location names
- Try foreign commercial sites. In some cases they may ship to the USA.
 - https://www.amazon.de/
 - https://www.amazon.fr/

A Note on Scanning

- OCR can help you with text printed in a language that you struggle with
- Employ software that incorporates OCR or point OCR software at an already scanned document in image form (e.g., jpeg) to create a doc in PDF form.
- Copy and paste into https://translate.google.com/
- Hints:
 - Scan one page at a time, not side-by-side
 - Make sure that the document is "square"
 - Configure the OCR software for the language

Scanning Example - VueScan

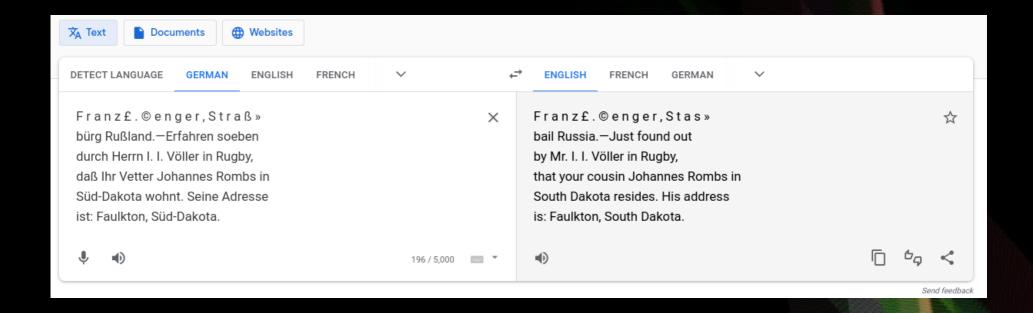


English Deutsch Etc.

May require installation of a file to support the language that you are working with.

https://www.hamrick.com/ocr.html

Translation Example



You will probably need to make corrections to the translation. e.g., Straßbürg would be better as Strassburg or Strasbourg.

Kesseldorf

Kesseldorf, Weissenburg, UEls., Elsass-Lothringen

Entry Map Ecclesiastical Related E-mail Feedback

LVII

Reselborf, D., Els.=Loth., B. UEls., Kr. Weißenburg, Kt. Selz, UG. Lauterburg, BKdo. Hagenau, PEPs 0,8 km Beinheim UEls., E Niederrödern; 356 E., Stdu. — Dazu Forsth. Spitalwald, PE 1,6 km Niederrödern, 7 E.

Show previous and next entry View entry on PDF of the original page



Volume 1

Page 953

Type D.

B UFIs.

Kr Weissenburg

Els. -Loth.

Kt Selz

AG Lauterburg

BKdo Hagenau

StdA Kesseldorf [self]

Population 356

Detail

Type D. - Kesseldorf is a Dorf (Village).

Meyers
Gazetteer (
https://www.mey
ersgaz.org/

Neibsheim

LVL

Neibsheim, Bretten, Karlsruhe, Baden

Ecclesiastical

Neibsheim, D., Baden, Ar. Karlsruhe, A. AG. Bretten, BRdo. Bruchfal, E 2,5 km Gon= belsheim; 1032 E., P, Stdal., Steuereinn., Tabakverwiegestelle, kath. Pfk.; SpDrl.; 8i= chorienbau, Min., Kalisteinbr.

Entry

Map

Show previous and next entry View entry on PDF of the original page



Volume 2 Page

Related

250

Type D.

Baden Karlsruhe

E-mail

Feedback

Bretten

AG Bretten

BKdo Bruchsal

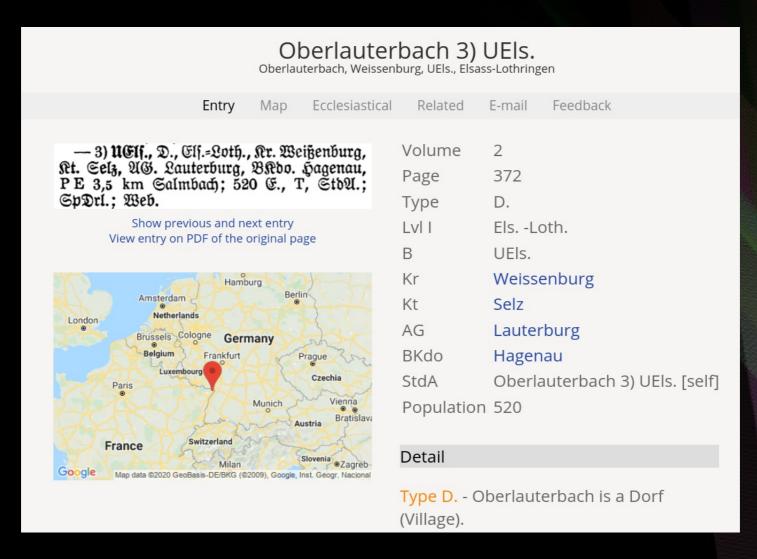
Neibsheim [self] StdA

kath. Pfk.

Detail

Type D. - Neibsheim is a Dorf (Village).

Lyl I Baden - Level I shows which Kingdom or State the place is located in.



See https://www.meyersgaz.org/place/20372040



Göbrichen A. Pforzheim

Göbrichen, Karlsruhe, Baden

Entry Map Ecclesiastical Related E-mail Feedback

Göbrichen A. Pforzheim, D., Baden, Kr. BKdo. Karlsruhe, UG. Pforzheim, EPs 6 km Olbronn; 1166 E.; P, Pw: 10 km E Königsbach; StdN., Steuereinn., ev. Pft.; Badanst.; KredVer.; Ilhrsettensbr., Brenn. — Dazu Hof Katharinentalerhof, P Pforzheim, 31 E.

Show previous and next entry View entry on PDF of the original page



Volume 1

Page 584

Type D.

Lvl I Baden

Kr Karlsruhe

BKdo Karlsruhe

AG Pforzheim

StdA Göbrichen A. Pforzheim [self]

ev. Pfk. 1

Population 1166

Detail

Type D. - Göbrichen is a Dorf (Village).

Lvl I Baden - Level I shows which

Kingdom or State the place is located in

Explore Online Records

- FamilySearch images images, some indexed
 - Use wiki to locate data by village/parish https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Main_Page
 - Following example for Neibsheim
- Marticula data (map, village name search) https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/
 - Following example for Nürnberg

Neibsheim at FamilySearch

 Kirchenbuch (church Book): https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/21 0808?availability=Family+History+Library

Film/Digital Notes						
Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film	Image Group Number (DGS)	For	mat
Taufen 1654-1838	Family History Library	International B1 Floor Film	1052137	8100982	Q	Ö
Taufen 1838-1900	Family History Library	International B1 Floor Film	1052138	8104542		ම්
Heiraten 1655-1900	Family History Library	International B1 Floor Film	1052139	8100983	Q	Ö
Tote 1660-1871	Family History Library	International B1 Floor Film	1052362	8115364	Q	Ö
Tote 1871-1900 Familienbuch 1652-1900	Family History Library	International B1 Floor Film	1052363	7992176	Q	0

Joannes Rombs

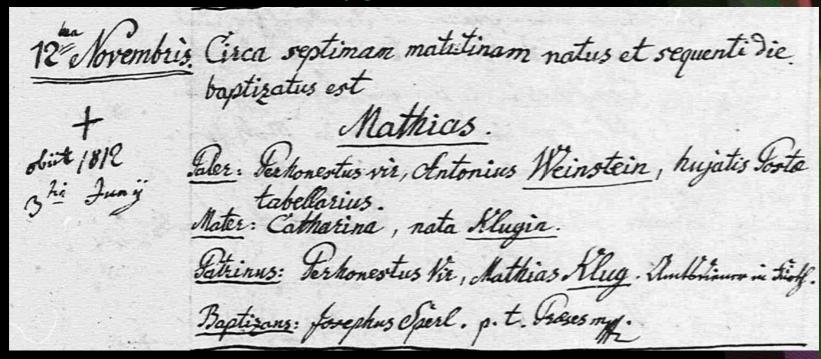
Principal Germany, Baden, Archdiocese of Freiburg im Breisgau, Catholic Church Records, 1678-1930 **Baptism** May 1738 Neibsheim, Bretten, Baden, Germany **Parents** Joannis Rombs, Margarethae



FamilySearch Centers & Affiliates: https://www.familysearch.org/centers/locations/

Example: Nürnberg at Matricula

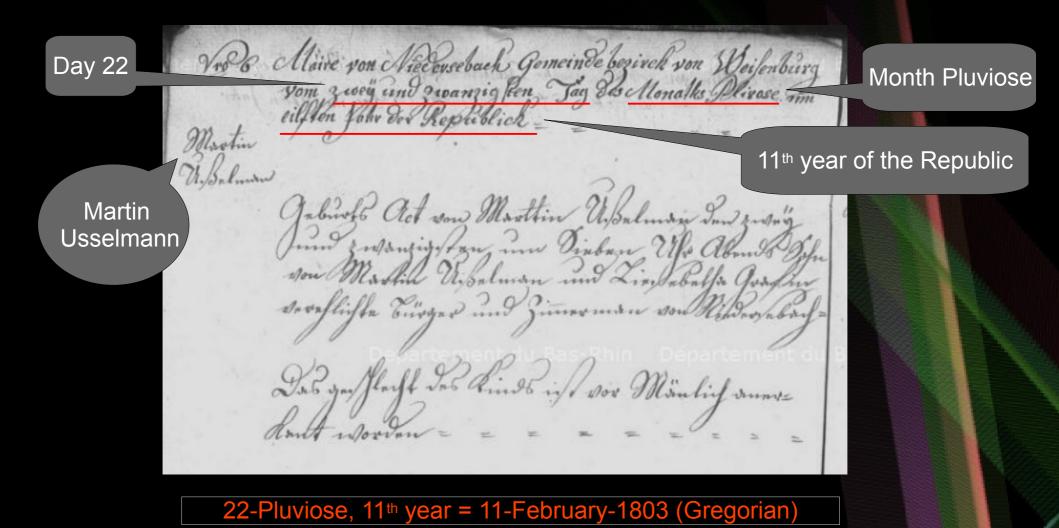
- Registers: https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/deutschland/bamberg/nurnberg-un sere-liebe-frau/
- Birth of Mathias Weinstein 12-November-1798
 https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/deutschland/bamberg/nurnberg-unsere-liebe-frau/M1%252F5/?pg=58



Develop Esoteric Skills (example)

- Bas Rhin Archives (French) document
 - https://archives.bas-rhin.fr/detail-document/E TAT-CIVIL-C329-P1-R202068#visio/page:ETAT-CIVIL-C329-P1-R202068-2335275
- Written in German
- Date in French Republican Calendar
 - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_Republic an_calendar
 - Converter: https://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/

Esoteric Skills Example



Get help

- The Germanic Genealogy Society of MN (https://ggsmn.org/) may help you get started interpreting samples from an ortsfamilienbuch, and they can suggest where in Germany you can write for more information.
- Societies overseas can be helpful by supplying transcriptions of hard to read records.
- Regional & national archives in other countries can be very helpful.
- Use Google translate in your (Firefox) browser to help you navigate and understand.

Examples:

GGS – see https://ggsmn.org/cpage.php?pt=26 for instructions on how to seek research help.

In addition, **members** can submit a specific research question for one-hour of assistance from volunteers. There is no fee for this assistance. Log-in through **Members** on the website and submit your request to the appropriate Regional Research Contact, or, email the Research mailbox – research@ggsmn.org.

One hour of research assistance is available to **non-members** at a **fee of \$20**. This can be paid through Paypal on our website. See our website **Store**, and choose the item - **Research Time**.

Paper requests for research assistance can be mailed to GGS, PO Box 16312, St. Paul, MN 55116-0312. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Get Help

- FamilySearch Communities https://community.familysearch.org/en
- France genealogy group https://community.familysearch.org/en/discussion/82884/france-genealogy-group
 - Technical problems

Get help

Bretten Archive https://www.bretten.de/tourismus-kultur-freizeit/stadtarchiv







Tourismus Kultur Freizeit

Familien Soziales Bilduna

Eine fabelhafte Schrift hatte zum Beispiel der vierte uns bekannte Lehrer Johann Michael von Rhombs. Wir finden seine Schrift in alten Akten; denn er war gleichzeitig noch Gerichtsschreiber. Daneben waren die Lehrer verpflichtet, "die Orgel zu schlagen". Da die Gemeinde im Jahre 1722 eine Orgel angeschafft hatte, von Rhombs sie aber nicht spielen konnte, so mußte er einen Präzeptor anstellen und diesen mit 12 Gulden bezahlen und selbst verköstigen. Für besondere Dienste in der Kirche, zum Beispiel für Jahrtage, wurde der Lehrer besonders bezahlt. So bekam er jeweils, wenn "das ambt an St. Wenelinstag in der Kapelle gesungen" wurde, 30 Kreuzer dafür. Auch erhielt er jährlich einige Bat-+Kids-Open-Air

> Stadtarchiv

reitag

MontagsLese

Stadtarchiv



Rathaus Bretten Untere Kirchaasse 9 Zimmer 104



07252 921 160



stadtarchiv@bretten.de



Get help



familiales dites « Généalogiques ».

A genealogical society in Alsace that has a number of publications that contain transcriptions (in French) of local records, including church records.

http://agawe-genealogie.c om/?p=27

Liens

Get Help



- Ubstadt-Weiher;
- Zeutern
 - https://hei matvereinubstadt-wei her.de/zeut ern/

(Get to know the local civil organization. Heimatverien ~ "home club")

Things Cost \$

- You may need to pay using something other than a credit card!
- International Bank transfer
- Foreign currency
- Find a financial institution to help and not fleece you.
- I found https://www.sdfcu.org/ to be much more helpful than the big national banks.

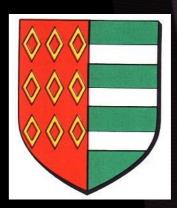
Do Your Work in Smart Ways, Hope for Luck

- Make your own luck by being thorough and analytic.
- Keep good notes/records. Perhaps keep a journal. (tool = https://www.zim-wiki.org/)
- Write a description of your work. Publish it and/or distribute it in order to get feedback. (e.g., https://281connections.us/)
- Keep expectations low, but hope for more. Ask yourself "what, so what, now what. " (Be agile.)
- remember the three maxims . . .
 - Be analytic & keep notes
 - Be inventive & agile
 - Seek advice from experts









Share Your Work!

- Write something in an interesting way.
- You won't live forever. Create something that might last if you see value in it.
- Identify a person who might be willing to take over your research.
- You're not going to get rich doing this. Make things accessible to others!
- Example:

https://281connections.us/281connections_Wiki/South_Dakota_Families/Rombs-Kessler/Teachers-RombsFamilies-in-Alsace.pdf

Be Amazed Have Some Fun