

GERMAN-AMERICAN  
GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

by

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*No. 1: University and School Matricles*

An excellent source for biographical and genealogical data are the educational institutions your ancestor attended. In Germany, university matricles (*Universitätsmatrikeln*) are located at the universities and often at nearby archives. Some of the German *Universitätsmatrikeln* are available in printed form as books, pamphlets, or in periodicals. In addition to the general vital statistical data, these records sometimes give the names and birthplace of the parents of the student. If your ancestor wrote a thesis or dissertation, it is likely that it contains an autobiographical sketch in its prefatory or appendix sections. If you don't know whether your ancestor wrote a thesis or dissertation, write to the appropriate university library and ask if he did.

Prior to the turn of the last century, there were 22 German universities. With the exception of those at Muenster and Braunsberg (Catholic theological college), the curricula consisted uniformly of medicine, pharmacy, law, philosophy, mathematics, theology and related subjects. At Muenster, law, medicine, and pharmacy were not offered. These subjects and various others offered at the remaining universities were not offered at the Catholic theological college at Braunsberg.

The 22 universities: Berlin, Bonn-Poppelsdorf, Braunsberg, Breslau, Erlangen, Freiburg, Giessen, Goettingen, Greifswald, Halle, Heidelberg, Jena, Kiel, Koenigsberg, Leipzig, Marburg, Munich, Muenster, Rostock, Tuebingen, Strassburg, Wuerzburg.

Prior to 1900, there were also some 229 teachers' colleges and seminars located in Alsace-Lorraine, Anhalt, Baden, Bavaria, Braunschweig, the Hanseatic Cities, Hessen, Lippe, Mecklenburg, Oldenburg, Prussia, Saxony, the Thueringen States, and Wuerttemberg.

Some of the *Universitätsmatrikeln* go back as far as the 16th century or beyond. You should also consider the possibility that your ancestor may have attended an institution outside of Germany (Austria, Switzerland, etc.). Note that the University of Prague was a German-speaking instructional institution even though it is located in Czechoslovakia. The *Universitätsmatrikeln* contain the following information: (1) date of admission, (2) student's name, citizenship, place and date of birth, (3) course of study and academic degree earned, (4) data on any oaths given, (5) date of graduation or withdrawal. For a bibliography of *Universitätsmatrikeln*, Eduard Heydenreich, *Handbuch der praktischen Genealogie* (Leipzig 1913; reprinted by Verlag Degener, Neustadt an der Aisch in 1971). Heydenreich also lists records on student corps (*Korps*) and fraternities (*Burschenschaften*).

Records of German secondary schools go back to the early 1600's. They generally contain comments on the student's academic achievement, personal conduct, previous schooling and places of residence, and the names of his parents. In America many German-speaking immigrants sent their children to schools run by German churches or organizations (e.g. *Turnverein*, *Freimannerbund*). Records of German-American primary and secondary parochial schools are usually found at the churches which founded them or at church archives. The school records of German-American organizations have been largely lost, although some of them may be at local historical societies or in the possession of extant German-American organizations.

Seek info on persons with surnames:

*Houck, Hueck, Huk, Huyk.*

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