

German Research

Handy Tips for German Genealogy Research

Where to Start

- The best resources for researching German genealogy are online in the US.
- Even resources in Europe are often available via the Internet, but not all.
- [Ancestry.com](#) [MyHeritage.com](#) [FamilySearch.org](#) [Germanroots.com](#) (links)
- Special Interest Groups on Facebook
- German Genealogical Societies in the US such as [ggsmn.org](#) [sggs.us](#) & others

Where Are they From?

- Finding the correct hometown is vital but can be difficult to accurately determine.

- You need to know the town name, the exact State, often the Kreis (or County) and the Country at the time

Germany as a nation did not exist until 1871.

Kingdoms – Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony etc.
Dukedoms, Principalities, Free Cities

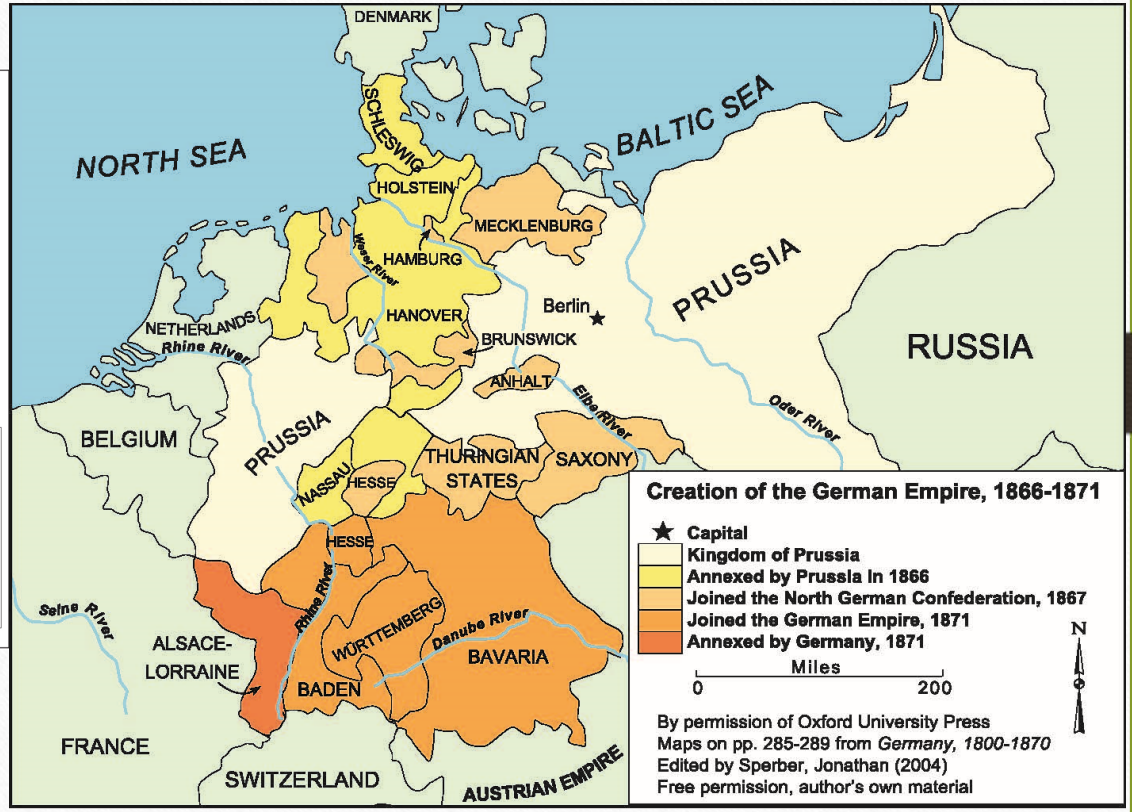
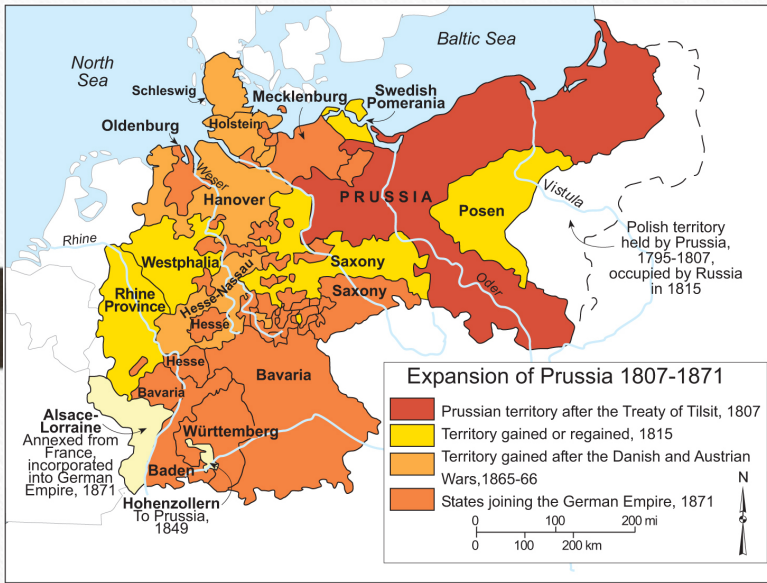
Borders changed due to wars, treaties, confederations, religious changes.

Maps of the Development of the German Nation

The following maps give an idea of the myriad jurisdictions of Germany prior to the creation of the modern German nation-state.

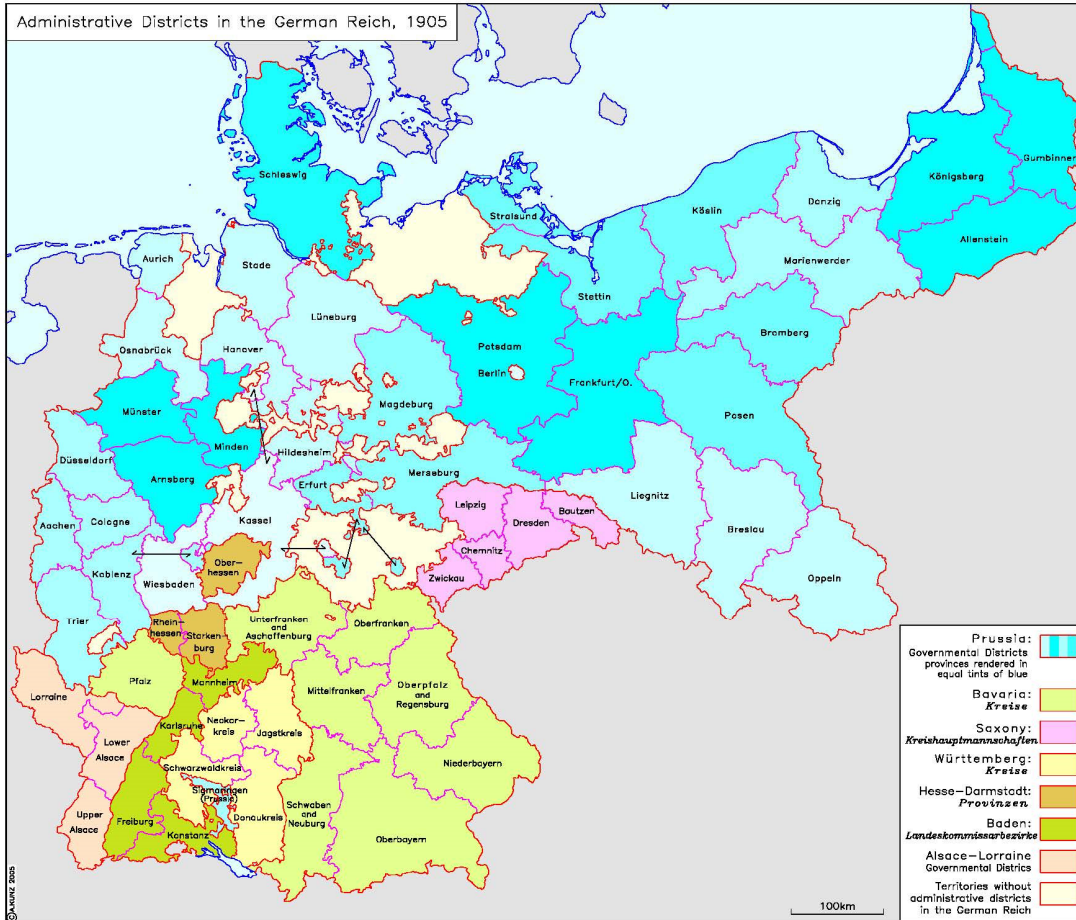
Germany, 1555





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 Maps on pp. 285-289 from *Germany, 1800-1870*
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Administrative Districts in the German Reich, 1905



www.Meyersgaz.org A digital version of Meyers Gazetteer created ca. 1905 which provides both current locations of towns as well as historical maps, locations of churches, populations, and other useful information such as State, Kreis, administrative districts and so forth.

Church and Civil Registers

Church records are crucial for pre-1876 German research.

Since civil authorities in several areas of Germany did not begin registering vital statistics until 1876, church records are often the only sources of family information before this date.

Civil registration records are records kept by the civil (government) registry office, of births, marriages, and deaths.

Civil Registration Beginnings

PRUSSIAN PROVINCES:

- Ost Preussen (East Prussia) 1874
- West Preussen (West Prussia) 1874
- Posen 1874
- Schlesien (Silesia) 1874
- Pommern (Pomerania) 1874
- Brandenburg 1874
- Sachsen (Saxony) 1874
- Schleswig-Holstein 1874
- Hannover (Hanover) 1809
- Westfalen (Westphalia) 1808
- Hessen-Nassau 1803
- Rheinland (Rhineland) 1792
- Hohenzollern 1874

OTHER **AREAS** OF GERMANY

- Sachsen (Saxony, Kingdom) 1876
- Thüringen (Thuringia) 1876
- Mecklenburg-Schwerin 1876
- Mecklenburg-Strelitz 1876
- Hessen (Hesse, duchy) 1803
- Bayern (Bavaria) 1876
- Württemberg 1876
- Baden (grand duchy) 1792
- Pfalz (Palatine) 1792
- Elsass-Lothringen (Alsace-Lorraine) 1792
- Lippe 1876
- Braunschweig (Brunswick) 1876
- Anhalt 1850
- Oldenburg 1811
- Hamburg (free city) 1866
- Lübeck (free city) 1811

Questions and Answers

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