

German ancestors

Local and Family History

Pathfinder no. 9



Bega Library:	Mon. – Fri., 9.30am – 5.30pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon	Zingel Place, Bega.
Bermagui Library:	Mon.-Tues., Thurs.-Fri., 9.30am – 5.00pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon	Young Street, Bermagui.
Merimbula Library:	Mon. - Fri., 9.30am – 5.00pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon	Market Street, Merimbula.
Eden Library:	Tues. – Fri., 9.30am – 5.00pm.	Sat 9.00am – 12 noon	Cnr Imlay & Mitchell, Eden.

Many people of German background have come to Australia since early settlement. In fact the first governor of the colony of NSW, Captain Arthur Phillip had a German father, Jacob Phillip, who was born in Frankfurt.

The first German settlers in the Bega Valley arrived on 10 March 1855 at Twofold Bay Eden on the barque 'Caesar'. It was an awful voyage, almost every family suffered deaths from cholera. On arrival the group of workers, women and children were met by a guide from the Kameruka Estate. They walked most of the way from Twofold Bay to Kameruka through the bush, taking about 3 days, finally arriving at Kameruka where they feasted upon sheep roasted on an open fire (Vicky Small, *Kameruka*, 1989, R994.47 SMA LHC).

Discovering place of origin

It is important and sometimes challenging to locate your German ancestor's place of origin. In Germany births, deaths and marriages were recorded at the local *Standesamt* (civil registry office), rather than in a central registry, while church records of baptisms, marriages and burials were recorded and stored at the local parish church. You may need to contact German archives and offices directly for information. The FamilySearch website (see below), provides these addresses. FamilySearch also includes an index to nobility and government areas with links to webpages covering the resources available for each region.

To complicate matters further, German land boundaries have changed dramatically over the centuries. The Germany we know today covers a vastly different area to that of the German Empire before unification and formation of the German Empire (*Reich*) in 1871. Before 1871, parts of Germany came under the jurisdiction of Austrian, Danish, French, Polish, or Russian authorities at various periods.

Australian immigration records often supply a wealth of details on individual migrants (see NSW State Records Office, Archives in Brief 50: German migration and settlement in NSW, listed below). Passenger lists are another useful resource. For example, many of the migrants who came to Australia from Central Europe migrated through the port of Hamburg where authorities compiled lists of their names, ages, former places of residence and occupations (for access to the Hamburg Passenger Lists, see the Family Search website below).

Various Australian record categories can help you pinpoint a place of origin in Germany: see our range of pathfinders including "Census Information" (no. 1); "Births deaths and marriages" (no.2) and "Shipping and immigration" (no. 4).

Naturalisation records are another useful resource for researching German ancestry. To vote or hold land German migrants were required to become naturalized and records of naturalisation may include information that can help locate immigration details (see NSW State Records Office, Archives in Brief 3: Naturalization records 1834-1903, listed below).

Name changes and different spellings may pose another challenge when tracing your German ancestors. Following the paper trail of your ancestor may give you clues. Search ship lists, naturalization records, church records, civil records or any record where your ancestor had to sign his name.

Internment and alien registration forms

During both world wars, in the interests of national security, 'aliens' (meaning residents who were not native-born or naturalised) had restrictions placed on them. During the Second World War the *National Security Act 1939* provided for the internment of 'enemy aliens', especially Germans and Italians. Internees included naturalised and Australian born persons of enemy alien descent, enemy aliens arrested overseas and transferred to Australia, and prisoners of war transferred to Australia. Information may include ship and date of arrival, date and place of birth, occupation, marital status, a physical description or photograph, and addresses in Australia (see the National Archives of Australia website listed below).

Books

Finding your German ancestors: a beginners guide / Kevin M. Hansen *929.1089 HANS* [This book has lists of addresses for German archives including church, regional and state, libraries, and genealogical societies]

Locating your German ancestor's place of origin / Eric Kopittke *R929.20994 KOPI LHC*

How to find shipping and immigration records in Australia / Cora Num *R929.1072 NUM* [This book has an excellent bibliography for researching German ancestors p.36]

How did they get here? Arrivals after 1924 / Cora Num *R929.1072 NUM LHC*

Websites

<http://mariners.records.nsw.gov.au/1855/04/052cae.htm> An interesting piece of Bega Valley History, this website records the arrival of the German ship Caesar in 1855, including name, station and age of the crew members.

www.ancestrylibrary.com Ancestry Library Edition is available for free on the Library computers.

www.familysearch.org FamilySearch, the family history site of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, provides an excellent guide titled "Getting started with German records". From the home page, click Learn/ Research Wiki/ Find records by place/ Germany. The website includes the addresses for German archives and libraries, civil registration offices, and church parish records. Scroll down the page to the heading "Related content" for a link to the Hamburg passenger lists. These lists contain the names of millions of Europeans who departed Europe in Hamburg between 1850 and 1934 (except 1915–1919).

www.coraweb.com.au/ This is an Australian gateway site for tracing your family history by Cora Num. Search for relevant records including shipping records by typing "Germany" in the keyword search box.

www.cyndislist.com Check the alphabetical index under "G" for Germany on Cyndi's List.

<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/state-archives/guides-and-finding-aids/archives-in-brief/archives-in-brief-50> The NSW State Records Office has a very useful guide to German migration, see Archives in Brief 50: German migration and settlement in NSW. Also to search naturalization records, see Archives in Brief 3: Naturalization records 1834-1903.

<http://naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets> The National Archives of Australia website provides access to immigration records, naturalisation records and alien registration forms (see Immigration Records Fact Sheet 227).

www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/fh/german-immigrants The State Library of Queensland has many useful links for German genealogical research, including German web sites for researching emigration records.

<http://www.staatsarchiv.bremen.de/> The only complete lists and files of passengers departing Bremen are for the period 1946-1974 and are held by Staatsarchiv Bremen.