



MICHIGAN GERMANIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



Exploring Michigan's Germanic family history heritage

Summer 2025
Volume 3, Issue 1

Willkommen

We have several great programs lined up for the upcoming year. Members will automatically receive Zoom invitations for their use. Our meetings are on the second Monday in March, May, September and November. The September 2025 meeting will be Monday, Sept 8th. The November 2025 meeting will be Monday, Nov 10th. The March 2026 meeting will be Monday, Mar 9th. The May 2026 meeting will be Monday, May 11th. If non members would like to attend our virtual meetings they need to email information@miggs.org for an invitation.

The May meeting of the society will be held Monday, May 12th, at 7:30 p.m. Scott Norrick will present "Germans to America Midwest, 1848-1900."

President's Message

Hope you are looking forward to our May meeting, and maybe enjoying some Maibowle (wine steeped with woodruff).

If you have not yet heard, Germany has issued a travel advisory to the US, after three German citizens were detained (see Reuters News Agency March 19). This is likely to affect some of our speakers at the International Germanic Genealogy Partnership Conference in Columbus Ohio in June; some are choosing not come to the Conference, not wanting to risk detention at the border, even though they have legitimate documents. If this reminds you of German emigration under Hitler, and the US refusing entrance, you have a good historical memory.

Each of us has had determined ancestors that survived and were able to enter the US. All of our Germanic ancestors were immigrants.

If you would like a Germanic take on the news, try Deutsch Welle (DW) which is a half hour news program in English. Check your local Public Broadcast Station to see if they carry it by you. In the Detroit area, it is on Channel 56 at 5:00 pm.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,
Julia

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ABOUT MIGGS

The purpose of the Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society is:

1. To promote the study of and interest in the immigration of people of Germanic heritage to America.
2. To exchange cultural information relating to the times, life, and society of Germanic immigrants and their descendants.
3. To encourage and provide the means for members to share their genealogical findings through meeting and newsletters and to promote the collection and preservation of such materials.



Before the Frigidaire

by Joan Cooper

In Western, N.Y. at the turn of the century, conditions in winter were severe enough to freeze surface water for considerable periods and considerable depths. The local creeks became icy pathways. It was possible to skate from Bergholz, N.Y. to Sanborn, N.Y. on Bergholz Creek and from Tonawandas to Martinsville and beyond on Tonawanda Creek. Sawyer Creek was used as a roadway when Niagara Falls Boulevard became snowbound near the Wurlitzer Organ factory.

The streams flowing into Tonawanda Creek were deeper and slower moving until after 1916 when the dam at the mouth was removed in the Erie Barge Canal realignment. Ice cutting was possible and provided winter work and winter income as well as the much needed means of preserving meat AND cooling beer.

Ice cutting was usually a cooperative job. 2 Martinsville saloon keepers used to cut ice in local Sawyer Creek, about a mile North of Bull Creek.

One young man escaped with a frigid bath when he accidentally skated over a cut area covered in snow.

It seems hard to believe, but ice was cut in several places along the Upper Niagara River which leads to Niagara Falls.

The famous "Love Canal" was a 2 block swimming hole in summer and an ice skating and ice cutting place in winter.

Ice cutting was hazardous job. Horses used in the work often went through, and getting them out alive was sometimes impossible. Cutting pond ice was less dangerous and more efficiently done.

Local farm fish ponds were used for cutting ice during winter months. The Germans had learned how to do this when they resided in Germany.

Ice houses were essential. Lumber mills in the Tonawandas provided tons of sawdust for the thick insulation needed. A cupola for ventilation usually topped the wooden buildings. Local farm ice houses had meat

hooks installed. Saloons had adjacent ice houses and a pond.

Local hotels, stores and bars were ready markets. To increase the sale of meats in summer, local merchants bought a clay pit once used by a brickworks to build a huge ice house over it.

A local man remembers in July seeing it "snow" in the cavernous interiors. This building is long gone, but skaters still enjoy skating on the pond.

The Das Haus Museum property in Wheatfield, N.Y., home of the Historical Society of North German Settlements of Western N.Y., has a collection in Der Stall which includes an ice saw, tongs, at few meat hooks, 2 handmade wooden ice sleds, and a five foot long pick used for separating ice cakes. There is also an old iron ice crusher and caulked horseshoes for doing slippery ice work.

The haus on the property belonged to my 5th great grands who came in 1843.

--From Fall 2024 Issue of Der Brief Published by the Historical Society of N. German Settlements of Western N.Y.

My thanks to my cousin Jonathan Schultz, Das Haus Director, for permission to publish this article.

Just as an added aid to see a map of this area, I found an 1852 map of the Town of Wheatfield, N. Y. On Google it shows the creeks and roads mentioned in this article.

I asked my brother, who still lives there, what the distances would be skating from "berg" to "berg".

Those creeks don't exist as they did 100 years ago.

I recognize the names of these towns outside of Niagara Falls because in N.Y., your birth or death certificate is issued by the local authorities in these "bergs". I am lucky enough to have had a mother who worked with her cousin to create our family tree based on church records in Bergholz, N. Y. We now have 44,000 persons on our site.



Michigan Records

by Julia Hanneman-Schoenbach

Did you know that Familysearch.org has a collection entitled "Michigan, Church Marriages, 1865-1931"? There is also a wiki entitled "Michigan-Church Marriages-- FamilySearch Historical

Records" that shows a list of Protestant churches whose records have been filmed. While mainly in southeast Michigan, there are a couple that are elsewhere in Michigan.

Altenheim Records

by Loretta Dunham

If you have an elderly relative that seemingly disappeared without a trace or died in Monroe in the early 1900's, even though they lived elsewhere most of their lives, you might want to check the Altenheim records in Monroe, Michigan. In 1893 the Altenheim in Monroe was completed and opened its doors to elderly individuals who needed assistance. The building was originally located on S. Monroe Street where the Monroe shopping center is now. The residents of the Altenheim, or Old Folks Home, were not just Monroe residents; the Altenheim welcomed individuals from around the state. There were requirements for admission, one of which was that no family member could take care of you. Some of the questions asked on the admission form include: Name, date of place of birth, marital status, names and residences of children, when did the person arrive in America, from which town or community, who should be notified in case of serious illness or death, date of admittance to Altenheim, and time and place for burial.

The Altenheim also had its own cemetery, which was behind the old building. All the markers have been photographed and are on Find A Grave. The index of residents and copies of the admission forms are housed at the Monroe Historical Museum, 126 S. Monroe Street in Monroe and they include records of the individuals who were admitted there from 1894 through 1939. The Lutheran Home continued to exist after 1939, and still does under a different name, but those records are not available to the public.

Check the Monroe newspapers for an obituary as well. I found several Altenheim residents' obituaries in the Monroe newspaper even though the person was originally from elsewhere and those obituaries are very informative, giving birth places in Germany and names of relatives. Here are just a few examples:

Monroe Democrat, 27 Jan 1905

Last Friday, January 20, Michael and Maria Wilhelmina Scheurecker, an aged couple of Detroit, were admitted to the Altenheim. Mr. Scheurecker was born near Noerdlingen, Bavaria, April 21, 1828, and his wife, near Culin, West Poussia [sic], February 20, 1831, making them about 77 and 74 years old respectively. Both were members of Rev. Claus' Lutheran church, Detroit, although some years ago they lived in St. Clair.

Monroe Democrat, 31 Mar 1898

Anna Hohensee died at the Altenheim Friday, March 25th, with obstruction of bowels. She was born in Friedrichsheim, Westpreussen, on January 1st, 1814, and entered the Altenheim from Detroit on March 4th, 1895. She attained the age of 84 years, 2 months and 24 days. The funeral took place on Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock at the Altenheim, Rev. H. Frincke officiating.

[*Monroe Democrat*, 30 Nov 1899]

John Stutzke

Wednesday evening shortly before 10 o'clock death relieved the sufferings of John Stutzke who for the past month had been confined to his room with cancer of the bowels. The deceased was born in Koenigsberg, Prussia, March 26th, 1847, and was united in marriage in his native home in Prussia May 15th, 1877, to Miss Amelia Hopp. Some four years ago they came to his country and settled in Detroit where they remained until June 8th, 1897, when Mr. and Mrs. Stutzke came to Monroe to accept the management of the Altenheim. Since his residence in the city, Mr. Stutzke has suffered with stomach trouble. He gradually grew worse and passed away Wednesday evening. Funeral services were held from the Altenheim Saturday afternoon at two o'clock with Rev. H. Frincke officiating. Mr. Stutzke was universally well liked by the old people of the home, for he was kind to one and all, and his death is mourned by all of them. He also gave the best of satisfaction to the directors of the institute. He is survived only by his wife who mourns his death.

Monroe Democrat, 8 Jul 1897

Mrs. Henrietta Maertens nee Jast, was born June 23d, 1824, at Jatzkow, Pommerania, Germany. She came to America with her family in 1873 settling at Detroit. She was admitted to the Altenheim August 31st, 1894. She suffered a sun stroke Sunday and died Monday at the old folks' home aged 73 years and 12 days. She leaves one son and two daughters. One of her daughters, Mrs. Caroline Grahl and daughter of Detroit, attended the funeral services which were held at the Altenheim Wednesday afternoon at two o'clock, Rev. Frincke officiating. The remains were interred in the cemetery of the home.

[Her marker in the Lutheran Home Cemetery has her name as Henriette Mertens, 23 Jun 1824 - 5 Jul 1897.]

Monroe Evening News, 15 Jun 1922

Death at Altenheim

Christian Cwahler [sic], age 78, died at the Altenheim on Wednesday afternoon. The deceased was admitted to the home from Mancelona, Mich., in 1918. He leaves several nephews at Mancelona. The funeral will be held at the home on Friday afternoon at two o'clock with Rev. Henry Frincke officiating. Burial will be made in the cemetery connected with the institution.

[Christian Zwahlen has a marker in the Lutheran Home Cemetery. He was born 3 May 1844 and died 14 Jun 1922. There is also a marker for Marie Zwahlen who died 25 Jul 1915.]

Links to the various digitized Monroe newspapers can be found at <https://gsmcmi.org/cpage.php?>

CONTACT US

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Newsletter:

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germanges@charter.net

Facebook:

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Twitter/X: @MichiganGGS

Website: miggs.org



Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society

President: Julia Hanneman-
Schoenbach

Vice President: Joan
Cooper

Secretary: Tim Salatin

Treasurer: Ed Redmer

Director: Rodger Wolf

Director: Loretta Dunham

Director: Brenda Leyndyke

Complete bios are available
at our website: [https://
miggs.org/board-bios/](https://miggs.org/board-bios/)

COMMITTEES

We all wear many hats – the Board of Directors do the following tasks and are looking for volunteers.

Webmaster – Open

Zoom Meeting Specialist – Rodger Wolf

Facebook – Shannon Gordon

Twitter—(@MichiganGGS): Open

Resource Librarian – Open

Newsletter – Julia Hanneman-
Schoenbach & Loretta Dunham

Brochures/Publicity – Brenda
Leyndyke

Email list – Ed Redmer & Rodger
Wolf

**Michigan Genealogical Council
Delegates** – Brenda Leyndyke and
Tim Salatin

**International Germanic Genea-
logical Partners Representative**
– Ed Redmer & Loretta Dunham

Contact Us: information@miggs.org

If you would like to join our team in
any of these capacities, please email
information@miggs.org.

WHY JOIN MIGGS?

If you have ancestors in Germanic areas of Europe, joining a society that specializes in Germanic genealogy can be helpful to your research. Joining MIGGS has the following benefits:

- Free 30 minute consultation with a skilled Germanic researcher
- Reduced rates for admission to Association workshops
- Preferred seating at our informative virtual meetings
- Many of our programs will have nationally recognized speakers
- Quarterly newsletter (paid members will get notified when available)
- Meetings, workshops, and event notices and first right to accept when programs become available
- Networking opportunities

All this for the cost of \$20 Individual and \$30 Household membership. A membership form is on the last page of this newsletter. If you are already a member, thank you!

Do you have any ideas used by other societies you belong to that have been successful in raising membership?

National reports indicate 22-29% of the US population is the descendant of a German immigrant. Come join our society and find out if you have German ancestry.

Affiliations:



INTERNATIONAL GERMAN
Genealogy Partnership

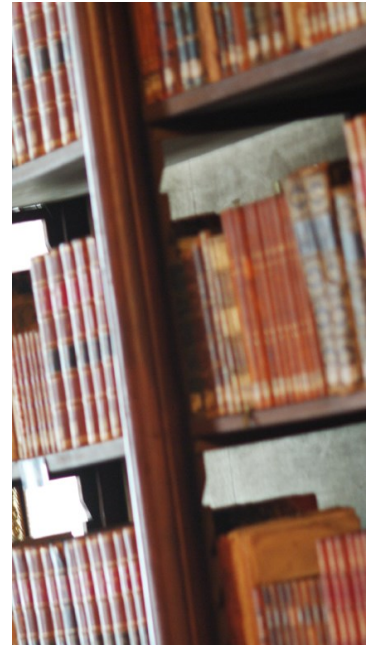


2025 PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT

The following programs will be presented virtually via Zoom on the second Monday of September, November, March, and May, at 7:30 pm. **Please note that our meetings will be held on Monday nights until further notice.** Members will receive a Zoom invitation. Non-members will need to email information@miggs.org for Zoom information.

May 12: “Germans to America’s Mid-West, 1848-1900” with Scott Norrick. With over 30 years of family history research experience, he is familiar with all the latest and time-tested genealogical tools. Through his company Ancestral Past, he welcomes the opportunity to assist others on their genealogy journey. He has presented to dozens of genealogical societies, history centers, and libraries.

Sep 8: “Resources for Genealogical Research in Foreign Countries” with Katherine Willson. She is an engaging and dynamic genealogy lecturer at regional and national events; a full-time researcher for clients; and a genealogy educator for 25+ years, including courses for the Salt Lake Institute of Genealogy and the Genealogical Research Institute of Pittsburgh.



OTHER NON-MIGGS EVENTS OF INTEREST

June 13-15, 2025— IGGP Conference 2025 - Columbus, Ohio

<https://iggp.org/2025-iggp-conference/>

Registration is open for the 2025 IGGP Conference in Columbus, Ohio. There will be 24 speakers covering a multitude of Germanic genealogy subjects. Be sure to reserve your room ASAP as they have a limited number available. When you register, please use Chrome as your browser.

May 7 3:00 PM – 4:00 PM (ET): Coffee Hour with an Archivist: Using MAB Online Search Tools

Are you researching Moravian ancestors? Join Assistant Archivist Tom McCullough of the Moravian Archives as he helps researchers learn how to identify and access materials and publications preserved at MAB. This free webinar will start with some introductory tutorials on the Online Finding Aid and Library Catalog, followed by an informal Q&A discussion. You’ll have ample opportunity to ask questions, and to chat with Tom.

To register: <https://www.moravianchurcharchives.org/event/coffee-hour-with-an-archivist-using-mab-online-search-tools-2/>

May 2 & Jun 6 3:30 PM (ET): German Interest Group, Eastside Genealogical Society

Eastside Genealogical Society (<https://eastsidegenealogicalsociety.org/>) out of Bellevue, WA allows non-members to participate in their SIG’s at no charge. The German Interest Group meets on the 1st Friday of each month, except July, and August, from 12:30 to 2:30 pm Pacific time. Currently, they meet virtually, and REGISTRATION is REQUIRED to attend their meetings. Visitors are always welcome at their meetings. For more information about the meetings, please visit their website at: <https://egsgermangroup.wordpress.com/>.

The Allen County Public Library hosts genealogical webinars covering a multitude of subjects. Check their YouTube channel for a full listing. <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8AE558B5D8661B31>

For other events see: <https://iggp.org/events-meetings/>

Was Your German Ancestor Lutheran?

by Brenda Leyndyke

My German ancestors were all Lutheran and continued practicing Lutheranism when they migrated to Michigan. There are many resources to further your study of the history of Lutheranism, which may help in your research.

I have been spending a lot of time looking at Lutheran Church records. I have used them in Michigan and online for Germany and Prussia. Lutheran records are good for baptism, confirmation, marriage, and death. Lutheran church records in some Michigan churches will have the place of origin in their records.

Before diving into Lutheran research one needs to know a little about the history of the Lutheran church. It is more than just Martin Luther nailing his thesis on a church door in Wittenberg. Although that is the beginning of Lutheranism, much has changed since 1517, especially in the United States.

In the United States there are a few Lutheran church affiliations.

- The largest, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) was formed when the Lutheran Church in America, the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and the American Lutheran Church merged.
- The Missouri Synod was founded by German immigrants and is the second largest.
- The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod is somewhat smaller.
- The North American Lutheran Church is a smaller Lutheran body.

An excellent family tree like resource for Lutheranism can be found at the Religion Association of Data Archives (ARDA) website found at <https://www.thearda.com/us-religion/history/family-trees?F=90> Other religion's family trees can be found here as well. When I say family tree I mean a list of religious groups and their descriptions. No surnames are found on this website.

German speaking immigrants attended services that were held in German. Some German speaking congregations started out as Reformed churches and split to form a Lutheran church. There were some German speaking churches that were Methodist.

During and after World War I, many German Lutheran churches stopped holding services in German due to the widespread prejudice against German Americans. If your ancestor's German Lutheran church is no longer in existence, it is worth researching where the

congregation members continued to worship. For example, the records from the German Lutheran church in Manistee, Michigan, are now preserved at Trinity Lutheran Church in Manistee.

Throughout Michigan, areas like Detroit, Frankenthum, Ann Arbor, and Monroe County were home to strong German communities. Many of these congregations also established mission churches across the state, further strengthening the Lutheran presence in Michigan.

Although it is not Lutheran, one historical German Protestant church is St. John's in Detroit. It was established in 1833 by Rev. Friedrich Schmid, who was sent to America by the Evangelical Mission Society of Basel, Switzerland. St. John's is the oldest German Protestant church in Detroit. St. John's served as the foundation for the establishment of twelve other German Protestant churches in the city. In 1969, St. John's and St. Luke's merged forming St. John's-St. Luke's Evangelical Church.

Synods form the organizational foundation of the Lutheran Church. The term "synod" can refer to either a church body or a geographical area. Identifying the church body to which an individual belonged is helpful for locating records. If a church merged, some records may have been preserved, while others may not. Understanding the church's affiliation can aid in determining where its records are archived. Tracing the history of a congregation—including splits and consolidations—can provide valuable insight into where its records are held.

Lutheran church records, including those from the Michigan Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, are housed at the University of Michigan's Bentley Historical Library, Ann Arbor, Michigan. The collection includes organizational documents, membership lists, church bulletins, and pastoral materials from various Lutheran churches in Michigan. Notably, records from Zion Lutheran Church in Ann Arbor and Rev. Schmid's are also accessible there.

The ELCA has an archive, many of these records can be found on Ancestry, or from www.elca.org/archives. The Missouri Synod information can be found at the Concordia Historical Institute.

If you know which congregation your ancestor was a member of, start by visiting locally to view Lutheran church records. It is best to call ahead and inform the church about your visit and the specific records you

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are seeking. In my experience, most churches are eager to assist, especially if you avoid the busy seasons of Advent (roughly Thanksgiving to Christmas) and Lent (the six weeks before Easter). Be mindful of the staff's time and consider leaving a donation as a gesture of gratitude for their assistance.

An onsite visit can yield valuable genealogical information. I have discovered one of my family's German origins through a confirmation record, found my ancestors' names on a marriage record, and sometimes even uncovered birth dates on baptismal records. These records are well worth the effort to locate.

Digging into church records has allowed me to further my research by at least three more generations and I am not done yet. Do not rule out digging for those church records to further your ancestral lines.

Online Websites for Lutheran Research

Association of Religious Data Archives-<https://thearda.com/>

Bentley Historical Library <https://bentley.umich.edu/>

Concordia Historical Institute-<https://concordiahistoricalinstitute.org/>

Cyndi's List-<https://www.cyndislist.com/lutheran/>

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America-<https://www.elca.org/archives>

Family Search Wiki-Lutheran Church in the United States-https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Lutheran_Church_in_the_United_States

Wisconsin Lutheran Synod-<https://welsrc.net/>

Easy Lemon Cake (Zitronenkuchen)

A simple recipe for a moist Zitronenkuchen – an authentic German lemon cake made in a bundt (gugelhupf) pan. Keeps fresh for several days.

Course: Cake, Dessert
Cuisine: German
Prep Time: 15 minutes
Cook Time: 40 minutes
Total Time: 55 minutes
Servings: 10 slices
Author: Marita

INGREDIENTS

For the Cake:

2/3 cup (150 g) butter, at room temperature
1 cup (200 g) sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 medium eggs
2 1/2 cups (300 g) all-purpose flour
1/2 cup (50 g) ground almonds
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 pinch salt
2 lemons (zest from both, juice from one)
1/3 cup (80 g) neutral oil (e.g., sunflower or canola)

For the Lemon Glaze:

1 1/4 cups (150 g) powdered sugar
2 to 3 tablespoons lemon juice (from 1 lemon)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In a bowl, cream the butter, sugar, and vanilla extract using a hand or stand mixer. Add eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition.
3. In a separate bowl, mix together flour, ground almonds, baking powder, and salt. Gradually add to the wet mixture and mix until combined.
4. Zest both lemons and juice one of them. Add the zest and juice to the batter, then mix in the oil.
5. Grease a bundt (gugelhupf) or loaf pan and pour in the batter. Bake for 35–40 minutes. Test doneness with a skewer; it should come out clean.
6. Cool the cake in the pan for 15 minutes, then invert onto a wire rack and cool for 1 hour.
7. For the glaze, sift the powdered sugar into a bowl. Gradually add lemon juice, 1 tablespoon at a time, whisking until pourable but thick.
8. Pour glaze over the cooled cake and allow it to set before serving.



This recipe is used with the permission of Marita of the My Dinner.co.uk website at <http://bit.ly/42mbzqv>



DOMESTIC (U.S.) MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION FORM 2024-2025

Please print

Last Name:		First Name:	
Mailing Address:			
City:	State:	Zip +4:	
Home Phone:		Cell Phone:	
Email address*:			

*We communicate often with email. We do not share contact information. It will not be published.

Our preferred method of sending meeting announcements is email. May we use email to communicate with you?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Membership Type:

☐ \$20.00 Individual ☐ \$30.00 Household

Membership is for one (1) year, July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

Payment: Cash ☐ Check No.

Make checks payable to: Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society

Mail to:

Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society
c/o Ed Redmer
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Whitmore Lake, MI 48189