



MICHIGAN GERMANIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



Michigan Germanic Connections

Exploring Michigan's Germanic family history heritage

Summer 2026
Volume 4, Issue 1

Willkommen

We are working on lining up great programs for the upcoming year. Members will automatically receive Zoom invitations for their use. If non-members would like to attend our virtual meetings they need to email information@miggs.org for an invitation. Please don't forget to renew your membership in July!

IMPORTANT NEWS

The May meeting of the society will be held Monday, May 11th, at 7:30 p.m. (EDT). Luana Darby will present "German Directories". We will also hold elections for several board positions. Please consider volunteering for a position. See page 6 of this newsletter for more information.

QUESTIONS AND HELP

You can email MIGGS with questions about your German family research. Please use the CONTACT US on the website. We can't do extensive research on your ancestry, but will try to point you in the right direction so you can be successful in your genealogical endeavors. Thank you Ed for monitoring the site for questions!

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

Guten Tag! Hope you are finally enjoying spring! We continue to have a fine lineup of presentations due to your membership and contributions. We will have our annual membership meeting at our May 11 zoom meeting, and our new membership year starts July 1st. Your membership is what makes our Society work! Because of zoom, we have members across the country. At our last zoom meeting/presentation, we even had someone from Taiwan! As always, this is your society, so if you would like to see a particular topic, or write an article, let your Board know! Thanks again for your participation. 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.



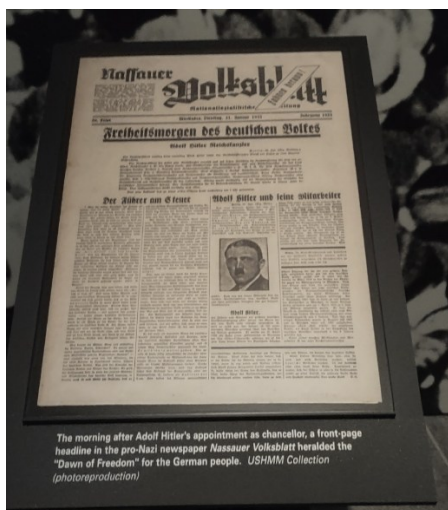
New German Database Explores Nazi Party Membership Records

by Brenda Leyndyke

A newly developed online resource is drawing attention from genealogists and historians alike, offering new insight into possible Nazi Party membership among German ancestors.

As reported by CNN on April 17, 2026, the German publication Die Zeit, in collaboration with archival institutions, has created a searchable database based on millions of surviving Nazi Party membership records. The database includes more than 12 million entries from the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), covering the years 1925 to 1945.

These records originate from membership cards preserved at the end of World War II and later held by the U.S. National Archives and German repositories. For decades, accessing this information required formal archival requests. This new project brings those records into a digital environment, making them more visible to the public.



Front page of the Nassauer Volksblatt celebrating Adolf Hitler's appointment as chancellor in 1933. The headline proclaims a "new dawn" for the German people, reflecting the optimism and national hope many Germans felt at the time. Today, newly accessible records reveal how widespread party membership became, connecting that moment of public enthusiasm to individual family histories. Photo taken by Brenda Leyndyke, August 2025, at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.

Early Support and Public Sentiment

When Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor on January 30, 1933, many Germans viewed the moment with a sense of hope and renewal. After years of economic hardship during the Great Depression, political instability, and the lingering effects of World War I, his leadership was presented as a turning point. Newspapers and propaganda often

framed this moment as the beginning of a stronger and more unified Germany.

Nazi Party membership had already been growing in the early 1930s, rising from about 850,000 members in 1932 to more than 2 million by the end of 1933. As the regime consolidated power, membership continued to expand, eventually exceeding 8 million. Individuals joined for a variety of reasons, including political belief, social pressure, or professional advancement.

About the Database

The database allows users to search for individuals who may have been members of the Nazi Party. Entries may include names, dates of birth, places of origin, membership numbers, and in some cases digitized images of the original membership cards.

Although widely reported as an accessible online resource, the surname search feature is currently restricted. Users attempting to search the database will encounter a notice indicating that full access is available only to paid subscribers of Die Zeit.

The database is hosted on the Die Zeit website at: <https://www.zeit.de/wissen/2026-04/nsdap-mitgliederkartei-karteikarten-familienmitglieder-suche>

In addition to the subscription-based database hosted by Die Zeit, researchers have access to a free alternative through the website of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft ostdeutscher Familienforscher (AGoFF). This genealogical society maintains a wide range of online databases and indexes, including finding aids related to the Nazi Party membership card files preserved at the U.S. National Archives. While not a fully digitized name search in the same way as the Zeit project, the AGoFF resource provides valuable guidance and indexed references that can help locate individuals in the NSDAP records without requiring a paid subscription. The site is available at <https://agoff.de/?p=119245#form> and offers an additional pathway for genealogists seeking to explore this aspect of family history.

A Tool for Genealogical Reflection

For genealogists, this project represents both an opportunity and a responsibility. While the database provides valuable clues, party membership alone does not tell a complete story. Each record should be considered within its broader historical and personal context.

This resource highlights the importance of examining family history with care, recognizing that individual lives were shaped by complex circumstances during a difficult period in history.

EVENTS OF INTEREST

Top 8 Resources for Jewish Genealogy in Germany

Presenter: Sabine Akabayov. Jewish genealogical research in Germany differs significantly from researching protestants and Catholics due to the distinct legal, social, and religious status of Jews over the centuries, which shaped the types of records created and preserved. This presentation introduces the Top 8 Resources for Jewish Genealogy in Germany, offering a roadmap to the most essential repositories and tools for uncovering Jewish family history. We will examine vital registers, databases, local, regional, and international archives, as well as international Holocaust-related collections and Jewish cemeteries, which often preserve genealogical information that is unavailable elsewhere. Register at <https://familytreewebinars.com/webinar/top-8-resources-for-jewish-genealogy-in-germany?language=english>

May 6 @ 11:30 AM Eastern time zone | online | English

Archion: How to Use It and Why

*This is a partner event. Presenter: Barbara Pieh. Archion provides access primarily to the records created by the pastors of the German Protestant Churches [Evangelische Kirchen]. They recorded the births/baptisms, marriages, and death/burials starting in the mid-1600s. Archion constantly adds new records as they are released by the local churches. The first part of this webinar will show you how to find your way around Archion step-by-step using screen shots. The second part of how to use Archion takes a closer look at the handwriting itself. In a third part of the webinar, the why of all this work is considered.

Register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/587399148510959965>

May 7 @ 1:00-2:15 PM Central time zone | online | English

German Genealogy Workshop

Join nationally renowned genealogist Dr. Michael Lacopo for a German Genealogy Workshop. Benefiting beginners and seasoned genealogists alike, this in-depth, hands-on workshop will examine a multitude of historic records and electronic resources that will advance your German genealogy research. Workshop presentations include: "Methods for Identifying the German Origins of American Immigrants," "German Genealogy on the Internet: Beyond the Basics," "Overcoming the Language Barrier in German Genealogy," "How to Overcome Brick Wall Problems in 19th and 20th Century German-American Research."

Register at <https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/event/german-genealogy-workshop/>

May 17 @ 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM Central time zone | hybrid | English

Ich glaube, ich spinne: Where to start on unspinning your German Genealogy

Presenter: Kristina Kaufman. Starting your German genealogical research can seem like a daunting task. You may face significant challenges like language and script barriers, navigating centuries of changing borders and governance, and knowing where and how to find records. This class is your starting guide, designed to help you work back and successfully trace your ancestors back to the Germanic regions of Europe. We will cover how to read the Old German Scripts, strategies for effectively moving from U.S. records back to the European origin, and where to look for records once you get there. Knowing where to start is the first step to successfully unraveling your German family history!

Register at https://ugagenealogy.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IN4tiEuETESbiWQ63c5WNQ#/registration

May 21 @ 9:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Eastern time zone | online | English

CONTACT US

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Newsletter:

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germanges@charter.net

Facebook:

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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 – Tom Koselka

Zoom Meeting Specialist – Rodger Wolf

Facebook – Shannon Gordon

Twitter/X—(@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

Program Coordinator – Joan
Cooper

**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
- Many of our programs will have nationally recognized speakers
- Quarterly newsletter
- Meetings, workshops, and event notices
- 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



2026 PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 11, 2026: “German Directories” with Luana Darby

In Germany, more and more directories are online. This presentation will tell you where to find them, how to work with them and how to interpret the information typical for German directories.

Did You Know?

House Names Instead of Surnames – In certain areas, especially in Westphalia and Lower Saxony, farm and house names (Hofnamen) held more significance than family surnames. When a man married into a farm-owning family, he often adopted his wife’s family farm name rather than retaining his own surname!

Middle Names Can Be Misleading – Many Germans had “spiritual” first names (commonly Johann or Maria) followed by the name they used. A man named Johann Heinrich Müller might have been known as Heinrich in daily life.

Spargel mit Sosse– Asparagus With Easy Hollandaise Sauce

by Julia Hanneman-Schoenbach

White asparagus, often called white gold, is incredibly popular in Germany. The most traditional way to serve it is with a Hollandaise sauce, boiled potatoes, and ham.

There is also purple asparagus, and our familiar green asparagus. Michigan has fresh green asparagus from early May to mid-June. For white (blanched) asparagus, it should be peeled from the tip down. Green asparagus doesn't need to be peeled.

Cooking asparagus: Use an asparagus steamer if you have it; otherwise a large pot. In your pot, bring to a boil water with 1 Tablespoon of sugar, and 1 Tablespoon of salt. Add 2 pounds of asparagus and cook about 5 minutes until tender. Drain. Make Hollandaise Sauce.

Blender Hollandaise Sauce

- 2 large egg yolks
- 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) warm water
- 1 tablespoon (15 milliliters) freshly squeezed lemon juice
- ½ cup (115 grams) unsalted butter, hot and melted
- salt and cayenne pepper



Into a blender, put the egg yolks, water, and lemon juice. Blend for 30 seconds until frothy. With the blender on, s-l-o-w-l-y add the hot butter and blend until sauce is thickened.

Season with salt and a pinch of cayenne.

Call for Volunteers: Step Up and Shape the Future of Our Society

Our genealogical society thrives because of dedicated members who give their time, energy, and creativity to help preserve, share, and grow our understanding of family history. As we look ahead to the coming year, we're seeking volunteers to run for office and take an active role in guiding our organization's future.

Serving as an officer is a rewarding opportunity to connect with fellow genealogists, contribute to meaningful projects, and help shape programs that inspire others to explore their roots. Whether you're passionate about research, education, event planning, or simply love working with people, there's a place for you on our leadership team.

Positions open for nomination include:

President – Provides overall leadership and represents the society in the broader genealogical community.

Vice President – Assists the President and oversees programs or special projects.

Secretary – Maintains meeting records and correspondence.

Treasurer – Manages financial matters.

Directors – Bring ideas, energy, and support to society initiatives.

No prior board experience is required—just a willingness to get involved, learn, and share your enthusiasm for genealogy.

If you're interested in running for office, please attend our meeting on May 11 and indicate you wish to be considered for office. Elections will be held at the May general meeting, and newly elected officers will begin their terms in July.

Step forward and make a difference! By volunteering, you help ensure that our genealogical society remains a welcoming and dynamic community for generations of researchers to come.

The current slate of candidates for office for the 2026/2027 term are:

President: Julia Hanneman-Schoenbach

Vice President: Joan Cooper

Treasurer: Ed Redmer

Secretary: Tim Salatin

Director: Rodger Wolf

Early German Settlements in Michigan

by Loretta Dunham

Early German settlements in Michigan, largely established between the 1830s and 1850s, were driven by a desire for farmland, religious freedom, and to escape political unrest.

Some of the early German settlements in Michigan included Frankenmuth, Westphalia, and "Germantown" in Detroit.

Frankenmuth was founded in 1845 by Franconian settlers for religious, agricultural, and mission purposes, it remains a "Little Bavaria" and is a major tourist destination, featuring Bronner's Christmas Wonderland and an annual Oktoberfest

Pastor Loehe organized settlements including Frankentrost, Frankenlust, and Frankenhilf (now Richville, 1850) in the Saginaw area.

One of the earliest settlements was located in Ann Arbor, with Germans from Württemberg forming a large farming community in the 1830s that grew to half the city's population by 1880.

Westphalia was founded in 1836 in Clinton County by German Catholic immigrants.

Detroit ("Germantown") is on Detroit's east side (later known as Greektown) that was once filled with German-owned businesses, churches (like St. Joseph's and Historic Trinity), and social halls.

Other areas where Germans settled included Monroe County, Sanilac County, Bay County, and mining-related settlements in the Keweenaw Peninsula.

There's a treasure trove of information to be found about this subject. Here are just a few links to get you started:

<https://www.clarkehistoricallylibrary.org/2019/07/immigration-in-another-era.html>

<https://www.journeytothepastblog.com/2023/09/update-german-recruitment-to-michigan.html>

<https://aadl.org/node/80429>

<https://www.frankenmuth.org/about-frankenmuth/history/>

The Night Watchman Tour in Rothenburg ob der Tauber

by Ed & Sharon Redmer

On our first trip to Germany in 2007 one of our most entertaining evenings was spent in Rothenburg ob der Tauber in Bavaria. We had read about the town in the Rick Steve's guides and thought that this medieval walled city sounded fascinating. After a few misadventures taking the wrong trains, we managed to arrive in Rothenburg and settled in for a few days. Rothenburg is a town in the Franconia region of Bavaria and is famous for having a very well-preserved town center from the Middle Ages. Its town walls are still intact, although parts of the walls were rebuilt after the second World War.



This picture from Rothenburg shows the Roderbogen Archway with the Markstrurm (Marks Tower) in the rear



The Rothenburg night watchman blowing his horn to start the evening's tour.

A highlight of our visit was the Night Watchman walking tour of the old town. The night watchman in medieval times patrolled the city after dark on the lookout for fires, thieves or anyone who might be up to mischief. He was armed with a lantern, horn and a weapon. Calling out the hours through the night he assured the townsfolk that all was well while waking up more than a few of them.

The tour starts in front of the city hall just before dusk. As there are no reservations, the watchman begins his tour at the stated time by lighting his lantern, blowing his horn and spinning tales about the history of Rothenburg. The night watchman (Hans Georg Baumgartner, who I believe is still leading tours) guides the group through parts of the old town pointing out features of the buildings and how people lived in the town in the medieval period. He also covers the history of the town and the local area. He talks about the Thirty Years War and the taking of the town by General Tilly of the Imperial Catholic Army. Our tour ended after dark, and only then did he collect his fee and any tip that the members of the group wanted to add. It was a fabulous evening, and Rothenburg is well worth a visit. We spent a few more days there on our next visit to Germany.



On the tour with Rothenburg's night watchman



MICHIGAN GERMANIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY miggs.org

MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL APPLICATION 2026 – 2027

Online membership application & online payment: miggs.org

Please Print

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

*We communicate often by 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, 2026 to June 30, 2027.

☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal

Payment: ☐ Cash ☐ Check Check Number: _____

Make checks payable to: Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society

Please mail to:

Michigan Germanic Genealogical Society
c/o Ed Redmer
7687 Nollar Road
Whitmore Lake, MI 48189-7209

Office Use: ☐ Cash ☐ M.O. ☐ Check # _____ Amount _____ Date _____