

## Finding my paternal great grandfather's parents – a case study for using various resources

Tonight I shall address the various genealogical resources used to determine details of my 2xgreat grandparents, the parents of Johann Christian Mann.


In particular, I shall discuss:

- family history books;
- the National Archives of Australia;
- headstones of graves;
- Y-DNA testing with FamilyTreeDNA;
- Meyers' Gazetteer;
- FamilySearch.org;
- transcription of German script; and
- Google Translate.

The Bradtke Family History<sup>1</sup> (published in 2000 by a committee chaired by Lyall Kupke) advised that my paternal great grandfather Johann Christian Mann was born at Hirschfeldau in Silesia, 11km north east of Sagan and 28 km south of Grunberg (now known as Zielona Gora). Hirschfeldau is now also in Poland and is called Jelenin. The book also advised that my great grandfather's parents were unknown.

Nor were his parents' names shown on his Naturalization Certificate or on his Marriage Certificate.

Some Naturalization Certificates may be found in the National Archives. Initially, searching for "Christian Mann", I could not find it. So I broadened my search to "Mann". I then found that his second name "Christian" was incorrectly transcribed as "Christan".

Select	Series no.	Control symbol	Item title	Date range	Digitised item	Item ID	Format
<input type="checkbox"/>	A821	SET 1/SC NO 41 FOLIO 2	MANN Johann Christan [Memorial and Certificate of Naturalizations] <a href="#">Access status: Open</a> <a href="#">Location: Canberra</a>	1853 - 1853		828464	

It is always preferable to go to the original rather than a transcription.

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<sup>1</sup> Page 51, *Bradtke Family History*, published by The Bradtke Reunion Committee (chairman Lyall Kupke), 2000.

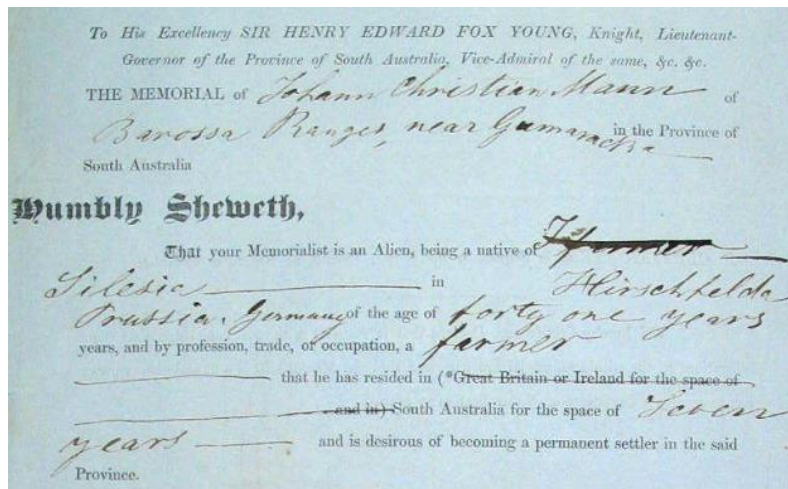


Figure 1 Extract from Certificate of Naturalization in South Australia, dated 15 November 1852, <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ListingReports/ItemsListing.aspx>, accessed 6 November 2022.

Among other things, the application showed he could write and sign his own name. Notice it is signed in German cursive.

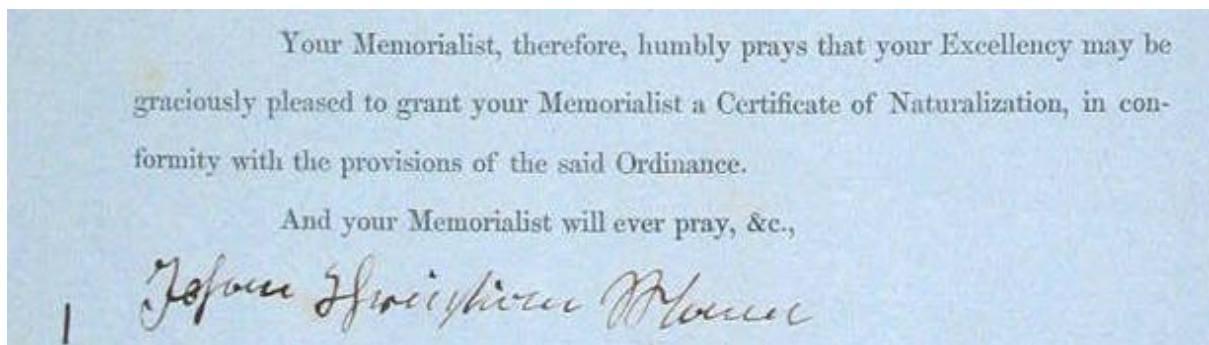


Figure 2 Extract from Certificate of Naturalization showing his signature

His date of birth was shown on his headstone at the Immanuel Point Pass Lutheran Cemetery as 2 April 1812.



Figure 3 Headstone of Johann Christian and Johanne Louise Mann.

In my quest for more information about my paternal line, I have had my Y-DNA tested by Family Tree DNA at the 37 marker level. To date my results are 1 match at the 37 marker level who records a Genetic Distance of 4 steps. The name of the match does not look German or eastern European and the Paternal Country of Origin is unknown. The match at the 37 marker level is estimated to have lived at 1300CE (650 - 1750CE). 6 have been recorded as a Genetic Distance of 1 at the 25 marker level; they are estimated to have lived at 1750CE (1450 - 1900 CE). Paternal Countries of Origin for these 6 are shown as Scotland, Wales, Unknown, Portugal, Ireland and Cuba. No clear information there, except that the common male descendant is likely to be at least 2 generations before my great grandfather. My next step will be to pay for a Y-DNA67 which will refine my matches to discover who shares a direct paternal line ancestor within a more recent timeframe and refine my haplogroup (currently shown as R-M269).

Marker Level	Genetic Distance	Paternal Country(ies) of Origin	Estimated Date of Life	Range
37	4	Unknown	1300CE	650-1750CE
25	1	Scotland, Wales, unknown, Portugal, Ireland, Cuba	1750CE	1450-1900CE

I saw a presentation given by Ian Simon to this group on FamilySearch and the Research Wiki. To use the Research Wiki, you need to know whether the persons of interest are Catholic or Protestant and



the parish where the activity would take place. My ancestors are mainly Protestant and the Naturalization Certificate indicates he was born in Hirschfeldau, Silesia.

Hirschfeldau was a parish village in the Duchy of Sagan, 11km northeast of Sagan and 28km south of Grunberg (Zielona Gora).

Using Meyers Gazetteer (meyersgaz.org), I determined the nearest Protestant Church to Hirschfeldau was Hertwigswaldau.

GAZETTEER

HELP

Hirschfeldau 2)

Hirschfeldau, Sagan, Liegnitz, Schlesien, Preussen

Entry

Map

Ecclesiastical

Related

E-mail

Feedback

The Catholic Parish is Hirschfeldau

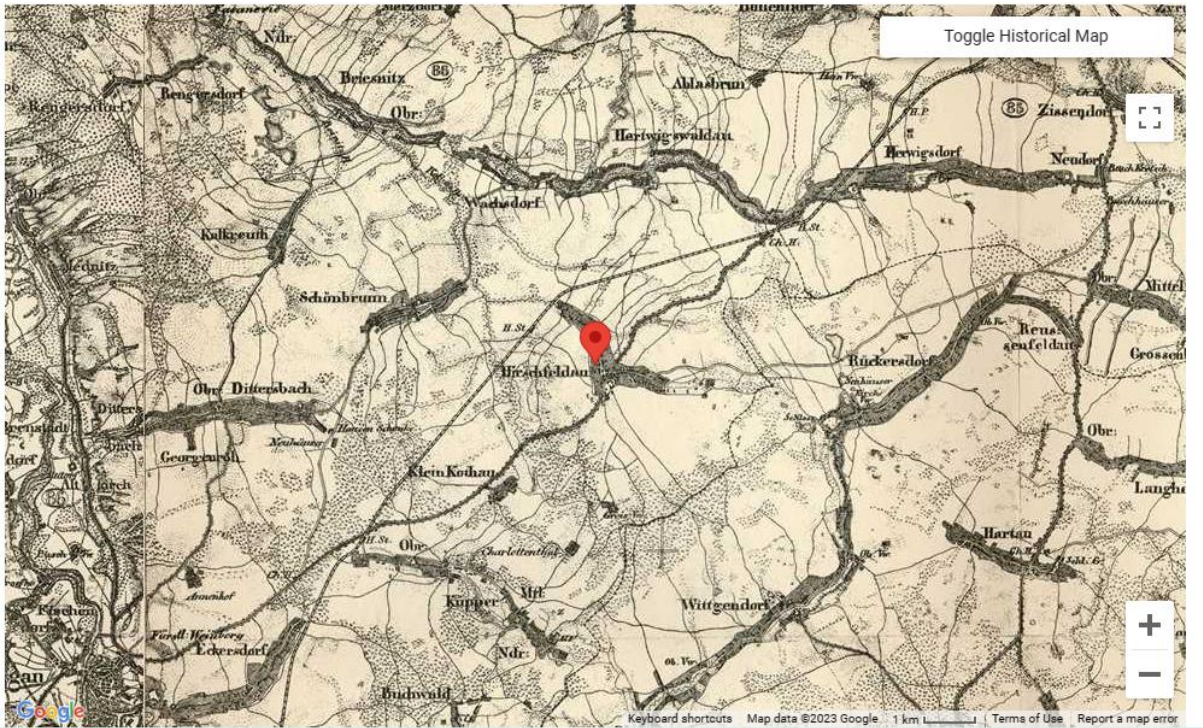
The Protestant Parish is Hertwigswaldau

\*Source: Family Search

The list below are those places from the Meyers Gazetteer that are nearby to Hirschfeldau (which may include itself) and are listed as containing a Catholic Church or Parish, a Protestant Church or Parish, a Synagogue, or Other Church.

Place	Distance (~miles)	Catholic Parishes	Protestant Churches	Jewish Synagogues	Other
Hertwigswaldau	3	1	1		

Figure 4 Extract from meyersgaz.org, accessed 7 November 2022.



The next step was to find the parish records for Hertwigswaldau.

Familysearch.org has extensive records, but is not easy to navigate.

Under “Search” on the main menu, you will find “Research Wiki” at the bottom.

After selecting “Europe” from the next page, where will it be found?

Jelenin (formerly Hirschfeldau) is in Poland. Hirschfeldau was in Silesia, which, when my great grandfather was born, was in Prussia, but, the Meyers Gazetteer covered the German Empire (1871-1918).

So, we look up the German Empire. Part of the list is shown below, including Silesia.



“Silesia” takes you to a page full of information, part of which I show. It is worth reading for background information on an area whose boundaries have seen frequent changes over the last 3 centuries.

## Silesia (Schlesien), Prussia, German Empire Genealogy

(Redirected from [Silesia \(Schlesien\)](#), [Prussia](#), [German Empire Genealogy](#))

[Germany](#) ➔ [Prussia](#) ➔ [Silesia \(Schlesien\)](#)

Guide to **Silesia (Schlesien)** ancestry, family history, and genealogy **before 1945**: birth records, marriage records, death records.

In this region, part of Germany which was lost to other countries after World War II, **many records, both church/parish registers and civil registration records, were damaged, destroyed, or misplaced.**

### Historical Background [\[ edit \]](#) [\[ edit source \]](#)

Silesia is a historical region in Central Europe. Historical territories of Silesia include:

- Silesia, split between Poland, Czech Republic and Germany
  - [Lower Silesia](#), split between Poland and Germany
  - [Upper Silesia](#), split between Poland and the Czech Republic
  - [Czech Silesia](#) (sometimes Moravian Silesia), in the Czech Republic
  - [Austrian Silesia](#), in the former Austrian Empire and Kingdom of Bohemia
  - [Cieszyn Silesia](#) or [Těšín Silesia](#), split between Poland and the Czech Republic
  - [Middle Silesia](#), in Poland
- The Prussian Province of Silesia (German: Provinz Schlesien) was a province of Prussia from 1815 to 1919.
- The Silesia region was part of the Prussian realm since 1740 and established as an official province in 1815. It became part of the German Empire in 1871. This is the region featured in this article.

### Silesia (Schlesien), German Empire Wiki Topics



#### Getting Started


- [Finding Town of Origin](#)
- [Finding Aids For German Records](#)
- [Research Strategies](#)
- [Record Finder](#)

#### Major Record Types

- [Church](#)
- [Civil](#)

This then takes us to a listing of all the records available.

## Germany, Prussia, Posen, Catholic and Lutheran Church Records - Inventory



This article contains an inventory of the microfilm/digital folders found in a FamilySearch Historical Records Collection.

*Not all the films listed here may have been included or indexed in this collection.*

To learn how to use the collection and to access the records see:

[Germany, Prussia, Posen, Catholic and Lutheran Church Records - FamilySearch Historical Records](#)

This table lists all the titles included in this Historical Records publication. The default sort is by **Locality** and **Author** (the organization which created the records). You can change the sort order by clicking on any column heading.

The collection contains records from 1,439 FamilySearch Catalog records covering 2,929 films/folders. The localities listed in the **Locality 1** to **Locality 9** columns are those found in the FamilySearch Catalog record sorted alphabetically.

The link in the **Title** column will open a new window where you can see the FamilySearch catalog record for more information on the records.

Please note that not all records contained in this material may be included in the index available in the Historical Records collection.

Locality	Kreis/District	Organization	Author	Title	Locality 1	Locality 2	Locali
					Poznań		



I then searched a long list for Hertwigswaldau.

Hertwigswaldau	Sagan	Evangelische Kirche	Evangelische Kirche Hertwigswaldau (Kr. Sagan)	<a href="#">Kirchenbuch : 1806-1870</a>	Preußen, Schlesien, Hertwigswaldau (Kr. Sagan)	Zielona Góra, Chotków (Żagan)
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The reference details are shown in the next slide.

### Kirchenbuch, 1806-1870

Authors:	<a href="#">Evangelische Kirche Hertwigswaldau (Kr. Sagan)</a> (Main Author)
Format:	Manuscript/Manuscript on Film
Language:	German
Publication:	Salt Lake City, Utah : Gefilmt durch The Genealogical Society of Utah, 1971
Physical:	auf 2 Mikrofilmrollen ; 35 mm.
References:	(Digital Collection) <a href="#">Germany, Prussia, Posen, Catholic and Lutheran church records = Deutschland, Preußen, Posen, Katholische und Lutherisch Kirchenbücher : COLLECTION RECORD, 1430-1998</a>

### Notes

**Germany, Prussia, Posen, Catholic and Lutheran Church Records are available online, click [here](#).**

When I downloaded it, there were 42 files and I had to sort through them all to find the relevant one. Identifying the year was OK, identifying the date was much more difficult.

Unfortunately, to access these records now, I would need to make an appointment at a FamilySearch Center, a small number of which are situated in suburban Adelaide (<https://www.familysearch.org/centers/locations/>). **The lesson from this is to save any relevant info you see and when and where you have seen it.**



[illegible]

The cursive is a mix of old German and Latin. Thankfully, I have attended several webinars, conducted by Katherine Schober of Germanology Unlocked (<https://germanologyunlocked.com>) and a seminar presentation by Janette Lange, then with the Lutheran Archives, on German cursive, and have several sheets showing the German equivalents of the letters I am used to.

7



Letters that can be difficult to identify include:

- “c” (one peak), “l” (like the “c” but with a dot above it), “n” (2 peaks), “e” (also 2 peaks but more compact), “m” (3 peaks); when two or more of these letters are together in a word, it can be very difficult to differentiate them; and
- “h” (loops both top and bottom), “f” (loop only at the top), “s” (one form of it, no loops).

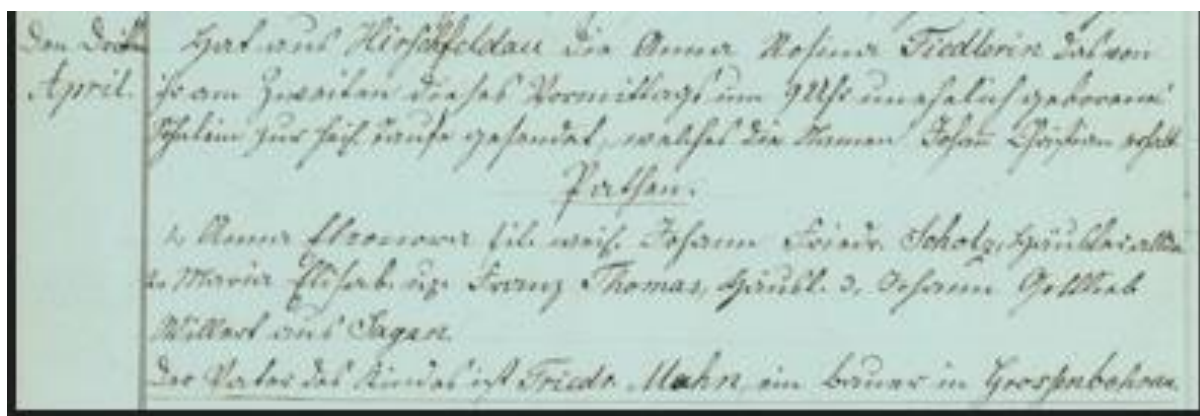
The second bottom row in the table shows the lower and upper case forms of “a”, “o” and “e” with umlauts; often converted to English as “ae”, “oe” and “ue”.

The bottom row in the table is common pairings of letters: “ch”, “ck”, “th”, “sch”, “sz”, “st”.

Although I studied German for 2 years at high school and all my ancestors that I have found to date spoke German, I cannot read German.

But I wanted to know what was there. So, using the cursive sheets and Google Translate, I crawled and struggled my way through the record, shown below.





I draw your particular attention to:



The line over the “n” at the end of “Johan” means a double “n”, therefore “Johann”.



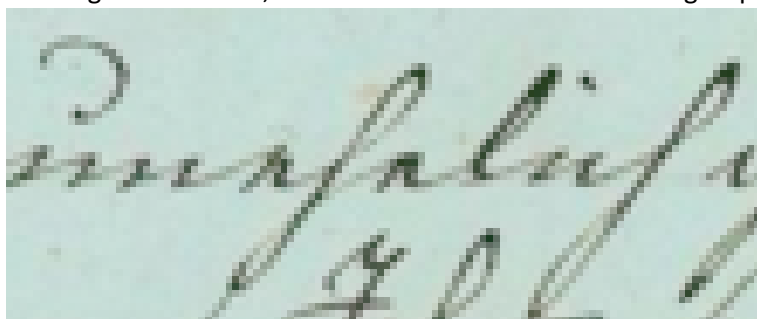
The suffix “-in” in German modifies the surnames for females into a specifically feminine form.



Notice:

- the abbreviation “Fiedr.” for “Friedrich”;
- the curl above the “u” in “bauer”; and
- the mix of German and Latin cursive in “Grossenbohrer”; the first “s” is a Latin “s”, while the second is German; and the Latin “h” and “u”.

Tools such as WordMine (<https://www.wordmine.info/>) can be used to determine German words; guess the start, middle or end of words and it will give possible solutions. For example,



on the second line; the first 4 letters are “uneh”. Enter them to WordMine, with “Words starting with” and “German”, tick the box below

and estimate the number of letters in the word as between 8 and 10 and we get the following:

**4 German Words Starting With UNEH**

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Prev. 1 Next

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**U N E H E L I C H**

**Definition:**  
*extramarital*

Show more information about **UNEHELICH**

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**U N E H E L I C H E**

Show more information about **UNEHELICHE**

Search for **uneheliche** in:

[Wikipedia](#) [Wiktionary](#) [Google](#) [Answers.com](#) [Britannica Online](#)

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**U N E H R L I C H**

**Definition:**  
*dishonest*

Show more information about **UNEHRlich**

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**U N E H R L I C H E**

Show more information about **UNEHRliche**

Search for **unehrliche** in:

[Wikipedia](#) [Wiktionary](#) [Google](#) [Answers.com](#) [Britannica Online](#)

The word is “unehelich” which means “extramarital” or “out of wedlock”. At that time, the right to marry could be determined by the local nobility or the community council who could decide whether the groom would be able to support a wife.

Once we have transcribed it, how do we translate it?

There are a number of tools online that can be used, including Google Translate and Deepl.

I applied Google Translate to the last line as below:

Google Translate

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[Text](#) [Images](#) [Documents](#) [Websites](#)

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DETECT LANGUAGE **GERMAN** ENGLISH SPANISH ▼

↔ **ENGLISH** GERMAN SPANISH ▼

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Der Vater das Kindas ist Friedr. Mahn, ~~im~~ Bauer in Grossenbohrau. ✕

The child's father is Friedr. Mahn, in the farmer in Grossenbohrau.

Location spelling may not be consistent with other sources; the extract from Meyer’s Gazetteer shows name as “Grossenborau” – map shows “Grossenbohrau”.

# Grossenborau Kr. Freystadt

Grossenborau, Freystadt, Liegnitz, Schlesien, Preussen

Entry

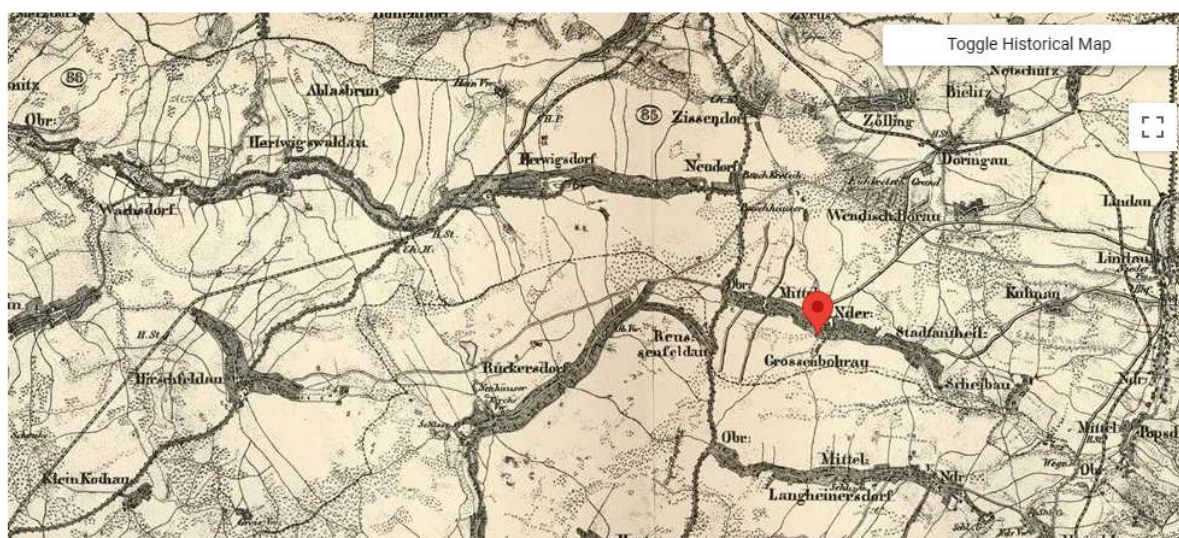
Map

Ecclesiastical

Related

E-mail

Feedback



I now know that on 3 April 1812, the son of Anna Rosina Fiedler<sup>2</sup>, born in Hirschfeldau out of wedlock on 2 April 1812, was baptised at 9 o'clock in the morning and was named Johann Christian. Sponsors were Anna Eleonora, daughter of the deceased Johann Friedrich Scholz, cottager, Maria Elisabetha, wife of Franz Thomas, agricultural worker, and Johann Gottlieb Willert of Sagan. The father of the child was Friedrich Mahn, a farmer from Grossenborau.

## Points to note

- It is preferable to go to the original document rather than a transcription.
- Save what you find and when and where you find it.
- The more you attempt transcription and translation etc, the easier it gets. There are people willing to assist, within this group, within your DNA matches and in Facebook Genealogy groups.
- The transcription and the translation do not have to be perfect. The concentration is on names, localities and occupations and there are resources online showing the German and English versions of words commonly used in Church records.
- Broaden your knowledge of all things German.
- There are many free or inexpensive online webinars on relevant genealogy interests, including those provided by Legacy Family Tree Webinars (<https://familytreewebinars.com/>).

## References

*Bradtke Family History*, published by The Bradtke Reunion Committee (chairman Lyall Kupke), 2000.

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<sup>2</sup> The text shows her surname as Fiedlerin, but the suffix "-in" in German modifies an actor noun into a specifically feminine form ([the german female suffix "in" - germanic languages - Feminization suffix "-in" in German: etymology and relatives - Linguistics Stack Exchange](#), accessed 16 November 2022).

National Archives of Australia (<https://www.naa.gov.au>)

FamilyTreeDNA (DNA Testing for Ancestry & Genealogy | FamilyTreeDNA).

Familysearch.org.

<https://linguistics.stackexchange.com/questions/14338/feminization-suffix-in-in-german-etymology-and-relatives>.

*Kurrent & Fraktur: An Introduction to German Paleography*, <https://blogs.ancestry.com/cm/kurrent-fraktur-an-introduction-to-german-paleography/>.

*Translating German Baptismal Records: A Step by Step Guide*, Germanology Unlocked (<https://germanologyunlocked.com/deciphering-church-records-baptism/>).

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Legacy Family Tree Webinars (<https://familytreewebinars.com/>).

Philip R Mann

10 May 2023.