

German digest great source for ancestry

By Donna Potter Phillips
Special to IN Life

The German Genealogical Digest has been around since 1985, and back issues of this helpful genealogical periodical are on the shelves of the Genealogy Room in the downtown Spokane Public Library. Since some of us have some German ancestry, we ought to take another look at this source.

The German Genealogical Digest can help you:

- Identify your German ancestral home.
- Locate your place names on maps and in gazetteers.
- Determine what sources exist for your areas of research.
- Find the location of your records.
- Read the German records.
- Learn correct research procedures.
- Contact others researching the same ancestral lines.
- Keep current on new books and sources.

Surely you're asking yourself right now, "How have I overlooked this source?"

In the past, and sometimes in multiple issues, the Digest has covered such subjects as "Learning Germanic Handwriting," "German Surnames," "German Newspapers," "German Census Records," and spotlights on different geographic areas. There has been a special issue devoted to emigration sources and one for locating German biographies. A regular feature is to show examples of the original writing in the records, and then teach how to decipher the words.

Larry Jensen, author of several books on researching in Germany, is the force behind the pages of the German Genealogical Digest. In addition to all the articles and regular features, Jensen spotlights in each issue what records have been newly microfilmed and added to the collections of the Family History Library in Salt

Lake City. Another regular section is a surname exchange, through which readers can register the German surnames they are researching.

The Digest also offers the service (for a small fee of \$10) to search for your surname in many of their German research books — books nearly impossible for non-German speaking folks to read. With the help of this service, I located my GOSS family in Dietenhausen, and then spent several happy hours with a microfilmed copy of the original parish register.

To subscribe to the German Genealogical Digest, send \$22 to P.O. Box 700, Dept. G9-LK, Pleasant Grove, UT 95062-0700. Back issues can be ordered for \$7.50 each. Write to Larry Jensen telling him you read about the Digest in my column, and ask for a flier telling more about his publication and the ordering information. Here is one place to get specific answers to German research questions, and I recommend that you avail yourselves of this resource either in the Genealogy Room or by your own subscription.

Columbia County: The Columbia County (Washington) Genealogical and Historical Society maintains a very nice section in the Dayton Memorial Library. This small group of about a dozen folks has completed the project of making a cardfile for all the burials in Columbia County, and while this index has never been filmed or published, Loraine Harting or Dorothy Hurst will be happy to check the file for your ancestor's name. The Dayton Chronicle, "the oldest weekly paper in the state, starting in 1878," Loraine told me, is also available in book or microfilm form in the library. If you need research help in this county, write to the society, c/o the Dayton Memorial Library, P.O. Box 74, Dayton, WA 99328. Or go in person — it's worth the drive down to this delightful little town just to see their beautifully restored county courthouse.

If you're considering the purchase of a genealogy computer program and have a million questions about enhancements and utilities, you will want to order the newly published book "Guide to Genealogy Software," by Donna Przecha and Joan Lowrey. Published by Genealogical Publishing Inc., this 200-page book is divided into sections on the basics ("What to expect from a program? Where to obtain programs? How do programs work?"), and GEDCOM and non-GEDCOM compatible programs. Over 30 different GEDCOM programs are featured, and printouts from the programs are included in the book. This book will answer questions about genealogical software that you didn't know you had! Call GPC at 1-800-296-6687 to order this \$25.95 book (or to request a flier giving more information).

Back issues: The Pend Oreille County (Washington) Historical Society is offering for sale all back issues of its periodical Big Smokes, as well as other publications of local interest and history. The historical society has been collecting and publishing local history since 1976, and would be happy to hear from anyone with an interest in the genealogy or history of Pend Oreille County. Write to the society at P.O. Box 1409, Newport, WA 99156.

Today's tip: The Kentucky State Historical Society has a research library in Frankfort at the old Capitol. It keeps a file of index-size cards for anyone to use and anyone with a Kentucky ancestor may submit these cards at no cost. Request cards from the Society at P.O. Box H, Frankfort, KY 40602.

■ Donna Potter Phillips welcomes letters from readers. Write to her at The Spokesman-Review, Features Department, P.O. Box 2160, Spokane, WA 99210.

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