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MEXICAN AMERICAN GENEALOGICAL SOURCES

BY

LYMAN DE PLATT

In trying to discuss an area as large as Mexico in less than an hour, necessarily many generalizations will occur. With that understanding, a copy of the full text of the lecture will add measurably to a more complete understanding of the sources.

Research in Mexican records must necessarily be preceded, as in any other area, with family sources. This is absolutely necessary in order to obtain the clues usually needed to trace ancestors who left little or no written records about themselves.

During much of the modern history of Mexico very little has been done to accurately record the names of those crossing our common border with Mexico. Although strict rules existed, few bothered to comply with them. Between 1903-1953 only 1,500,000 individual records are on file at the Immigration and Naturalization Office in El Paso, Texas. This is the total number of people who were granted border-crossing privileges from California to Texas. Between just 1946-1953 there were 3,201,371 persons turned back at the border because of improper identification.

For many who cannot trace their ancestors in the immigration records, the normal U.S. sources: 1880, 1900, 1910 censuses, the International Genealogical Index at the Genealogical Society, vital records, land records, cemeteries, probates, military archives, and local histories should be used to acquire more details.

CIVIL REGISTRATION

The recording of births, marriages, and deaths began in Mexico in 1857. These records are kept on a municipal level and are very valuable for many administrative and legal matters such as the establishment of the rights of inheritance, citizenship, eligibility for school attendance and military service, and entitlement to benefits. For the purposes of this study they provide the information necessary to reconstruct entire family units. Many times birth records give the names of grandparents as well as parents. Civil registration is considered the best single source for doing genealogical research in the modern time period.

ECCLESIASTICAL RECORDS

The principal church records available throughout Mexico are parish registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials. Generally speaking, the oldest records provide the least amount of information. In some parts of the country separate parish registers were kept for Spaniards, Indians, negros and their admixtures. This facilitates research greatly if the race is known.

Some church censuses or padrones have been discovered in diocesan and archdiocesan archives throughout the country. The largest collections are those

in the Archivo General de la Nación, the Archbishop's Archives in Mexico City, the Archbishop's Archives in Guadalajara, and the Archivo Histórico del Museo de la Casa de Morelos in Morelia. The records from the last three archives are on microfilm at the Genealogical Society and an index is being prepared by the author.

Other ecclesiastical records found in diocesan archives include marriage disputes, cancellations, ecclesiastical trials, chaplaincy records, wills, tithing records, and property titles.

Most of the parish records of Mexico have been microfilmed by the Genealogical Society and are available throughout their library system.

MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS

There are a variety of types of burial grounds in the United States, Mexico, and elsewhere in Latin America, and they each contain different degrees of information, some of which is completely valueless. Prior to March 1, 1794, all cemeteries in Mexico were maintained by the local churches. Nearly all of these churchyard burial grounds have disappeared because of the normal deterioration of time or because of the modernization of the areas in which they used to exist. Some burial information still can be found prior to 1600, but it is usually found in the walls and floors of the churches where it has been protected from the elements, or else it has been copied years ago and preserved in written form. In 1794 Charles IV of Spain ordered the establishment of civil cemeteries in the urban areas of the principal cities throughout the kingdom. Most of these cemeteries did not begin until the commencement of civil registration, however, and in Mexico that is in 1857. These civil cemeteries were formed in each municipality. Records were kept of burials, exhumations, sales of plots, niches and crypts. Many of these older records have been transferred from the cemetery offices to local archives. They are very valuable for genealogical purposes.

NOTARIAL RECORDS

After the records already mentioned, the next most important and informative are the notarial records. Everything of a public or legal nature pertaining to individuals that needed recording during the colonial period usually found its way into the notarial books. These books include wills, land transactions, dowry information, contracts, bonds, powers, mortgages, complaints, charges, payments, etc.

Some notarial records have been destroyed for various reasons, but for the most part they are still available in good condition in the original archives of the state, or in the Archivo General de Notarias, or in the Archivo General de la Nación both in Mexico City.

It was not customary to make indexes of the notarial books, although some of the books do have them. More records have been indexed following the record reform period following the revolution that established Mexico as a soverign country.

LAND RECORDS

Of all the records best suited to genealogical and historical research in

Mexico and the United States, those that deal with land are found in more assorted places than any other.

During the initial years of the conquest, large land grants, called encomiendas, were distributed to those who assisted in pacification and conquest. The records today are kept in the Archivo General de la Nación. An index to this collection begins in the Boletin of the Archive, beginning with volume one, number one, published in 1960. The section in the Archive itself is called Tierras. There are a total of 3,832 volumes in this collection. Included in it are many records for northern Mexico and the southwestern part of the United States.

A great deal of land passed into the possession of the Catholic Church through gifts during the hundreds of years of the colonial period. Wealthy Spaniards would bequeath their property to the custody of a chaplain who would administer the estate from year to year, taking proceeds from its production to pay his salary, say masses in behalf of the deceased benefactor, and provide other Christian services to local people and organizations. These records called capellanías, exist in large numbers in ecclesiastical archives and in the section by that name at the Archivo General de la Nación.

Another section of this same Archive, entitled Ramo de Vinculos, contains many hereditary estate records between 1557-1814. There is an index to the section which gives excellent relationship information for two and three generations per document.

Finally, one of the largest repositories for land record information must be the notarial archives already referred to. The wills contained therein, the mortgages of property, the disputes between relative for one item or another, all contain rich details concerning the lands of the country. In the Archivo General de la Nación, Ramo de Intestados, there are numerous records for the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries dealing with intestate probate records. These certainly must be considered along with the others in dealing with the lands of Mexico.

LYMAN D. PLATT: Professional Genealogist, specializing in Latin America; Teacher, Mexican Correspondence courses, BYU, Provo Utah (1975-1982); Chairman Arbitration Committee APG; Member of Utah Genealogical Association and Los Californianos. Presently employed at the Genealogical Department as a Senior Research Specialist. President of Genealogical Indexing Associates. President of Highland Microdata Systems.

GENEALOGICAL PUBLICATIONS: The Perkins Family History (1975); The Journal of Bishop Edward Partridge (1975); A Genealogical Historical Guide to Latin America (1978); Una Guía Genealógico-Histórica de Latinoamérica (1978); Mexican Research (1979); Investigaciones Genealógicas en México (1979); The Platt Family History (1979); The Mexican Military (1980); Hispanic-American Records and Research (1980) More information about Mr Platt can be found with lecture 4F in this book.

THE FRENCH IN AMERICA
With Some Emphasis on Huguenot Research

by
Winston De Ville, F.A.S.G.

I: European Backgrounds

II: Earliest Beginnings in America

III: The Huguenots in Europe and in America

IV: The Catholic French in America

WINSTON DE VILLE, a native of Louisiana, is a Fellow of the American Society of Genealogists, former Trustee of the Board for Certification of Genealogists, and presently serves as a Trustee of the Association for the Promotion of Scholarship in Genealogy, Ltd., publishers of The Genealogist. A full-time professional genealogist, with clients throughout the United States, in France, Canada, and Spain, Mr. De Ville has published sixteen books relating to the French in America, and his articles have appeared in many scholarly journals. In 1975, he received The Prichard Award for outstanding contributions to Louisiana historiography, and in 1976, he was recognized by the Government of Canada for his contributions to U.S.-Canadian friendship. Since 1972, De Ville has lectured at the annual institute on genealogy sponsored by the National Archives. Currently, he serves as national chairman for public relations for the National Genealogical Society's Annual Conference in the States to be held in Ft. Worth, Texas, in April of 1983.

SOME TITLES AND AUTHORS ON THE SUBJECT OF HUGUENOT GENEALOGY:

Charles W. Baird: The History of the Huguenot Emigration to America
Henry M. Baird: The Huguenots and Henry of Navarre
Henry M. Baird: The Huguenots and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes
Colin G. Botha: The French Refugees at the Cape
Robert A. Brock: Documents Relating to the Huguenot Emigration to Virginia
James L. Bugg: "The Huguenot Frontier Settlement of Manakin Town," article in The Va. Magazine of History and Biography, volume 61, pp. 359-394
William D. Cooper: List of Foreign Protestants and Aliens Resident in England, Camden Society Publication no. LXXXII
H.A. Davis: Some Huguenot Families of S.C. and Georgia
Effingham de Forest: "Records of the French Church at Narragansett, 1686-1691, article in The N.Y. Genealogical and Biographical Record, vol. 70, pp. 236-241
Samuel Dubose and F.A. Forcher: Contribution to the History of the Huguenots of S.C.
Allen Forbes: The Boston French
C.M.B. Gilman: The Huguenot Migration in Europe and America, Its Cause and Effect
Charles Hughes Hamlin: List of 148 French Huguenots Who Were Naturalized in 1705 by an Act of Assembly
A.H. Hirsch: The Huguenots of Colonial S.C.
The Huguenot (Publications)
Huguenot Society of America, Catalogue of the Library of the
Huguenot Society of London (Proceedings)
Huguenot Society of London (Publications)
Huguenot Society of S.C. (Transactions)
Charles E. Lart: Huguenot Pedigrees
Grace L. Lee: The Huguenot Settlements in Ireland
Hannah F. Lee: The Huguenots in France and America
Ralph LeFevre: The History of New Paltz, N.Y. and its Old Families from 1678 to 1820
Anne Marsh-Caldwell: The History of the Protestant Reformation in France
Daniel Ravenel: Liste des François et Suisses, from an Old Manuscript List of French and Swiss Protestants Settled in Charleston, on the Santee , and at the Orange Quarter in Carolina
G.E. Reaman: The Trail of the Huguenots in Europe, the U.S., South Africa, and Canada
Samuel Smiles: The Huguenots: Their Settlements, Churches, and Industries in England and Ireland
Charles Weiss: History of the French Protestant Refugees
A.V. Wittmeyer: Registers of Births, Marriages and Deaths of the Eglise Francaise a la Nouvelle York from 1688 to 1804.

SOME ADDITIONAL TITLES OF INTEREST TO FRENCH GENEALOGY:

Archives Nationales (of France): Guide des Recherches sur l'Histoire des Familles
Pierre Durye: Genealogy: An Introduction to Continental Concepts
Yann Grandeau: A la recherche de vos ancetres: Guide du genealogiste amateur
Pierre Callery: La Genealogie, une science, un jeu: Quelques elements techniques pour une recherce genealogique

Jean-Louis Beaucarnot: Chasseur d'ancetres
Christian Wolff: Guide des recherches genealogiques en Alsace, Strasbourg
Etienne Arnaud: Repertoire de genealogies francaises imprimees
Gaston Saffroy: Bibliographie genealogique, heraldique et nobiliaire de la France des origines a nos jours
Gaston Saffroy: Bibliographie des almanachs et annuaires administratifs ecclesiastiques et militaires francais de l'Ancien Regime et des almanachs et annuaires genealogiques et nobiliaires du XVIe siecle a nos jours

Roman d'Amat: Dictionnaire de biographie francaise

Gustave Chaix d'Est-Ange: Dictionnaire des familles francaises anciennes our notables a la fin du XIXe siecle

Archives Nationales (of France): Inventaire des Archives Coloniales: Correspondance a l'arrivee en provenance de la Louisiane

Albert Dauzat: Dictionnaire Etymologique des noms de famille et prenoms de France

A.-J. Greimas: Dictionnaire de l'ancien francais

SOME USEFULL ADDRESSES FOR FRENCH GENEALOGY:

Cercle d'Etudes Genealogique Antilles-Guyane, Mr. Philippe Rossignol, 40, Quai Pasteur 77000 Melun, France
Societe Francaise d'Heraldique et de Sigillographie, 60, Rue des Francs -Bourgeois, 75003 Paris, France
France-Louisiane, 65, Avenue des Invalides, 75007 Paris, France
Centre de Genealogie et d'Histoire des Iles d'Amerique, 30, rue Boissiere 75016 Paris, France
Centre Genealogique de Paris (all regions) Mr. Jacques Ameil, President, 19, Avenue d'Eylau, 75116 Paris, France
Centre Genealogique Protestant, 54 rue des Saints-Peres, 75007 Paris, France
Centre d'Entraide Genealogique (all regions), 69, rue du Cardinal Lemoine, 75005 Paris, France
Genealogie et Histoire, Boite Postale 7, 69540 Irigny, France
Institut de Documentation et d'Etudes Genealogiques, 67, Avenue de Paris, 78000 Versailles, France
"La Revue Francaise de Genealogie (a national, independant genealogy magazine) Louppy-sur-Chee, 55000 Bar-le-Duc, France
Association Genealogique des Indes Francaises, Tristan de Feuilhade, 39, Blvd. Montmorency, 75016 Paris, France

(Note: Bibliography and list of addresses courtesy of Mme. Barbara Allemand, 3 Passage Rauch, 75011 Paris, France. Mme. Allemand is a native of the United States, has lived and done research in France for many years, and is a highly capable professional genealogist.)

2A & 4A (Tape recording available in HFEA Kinseekers library.)

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN WEST & EAST GERMANY by Gladys Muller

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gladys Muller is a professional genealogical researcher with over fifteen years of experience in the field. She is an instructor of genealogy for Rio Hondo College and Coastline Colleges. She is one of the founding members of the Whittier Area Genealogical Society and is the current President of that organization. In addition, she serves as a Director on the Board of the Southern California Genealogical Society.

She has traveled to Germany three times to do genealogical research in that country's original records. Other European research trips have taken her to England, Scotland and Ireland.

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN WEST & EAST GERMANY

Available Records

1. Parish Records (Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed) - earliest about 1550
   Baptismal, Marriage, Burial & Confirmation Registers; House or Family Books
   Most in hands of local pastor
   30% on LDS microfilm
   Address to: An das katholische Pfarramt OR An das evangelische Pfarramt
2. Civil Records - from 1876 (from 1798 in the Palatine)
   Birth, Marriage and Death Registers
   In the hands of local Civil Registrar
   Very few on LDS microfilm
   Address to: An das Standeamt
3. Census Records - almost non-existant
   Since 1830 police have kept Registers of all people in their jurisdiction
   Kept locally
   None on LDS microfilm
   Address to: An das Einwohnermeldeamt
4. Local Archive Records
   City directories, tax books, guild records, citizen lists, resident lists
   Kept locally either in separate archive or in care of Civil Registrar
   Archive address: See A Guide to Foreign Genealogical Research by Wellauer
   Address Civil Registrar: An das Standeamt
5. Military Records
   Hessians: Hessische Truppen im Amerikanischen Unabhängigkeitskrieg
   (Hetrina Project) 5 vols
   For deserters see Monographs (4) by Clifford Smith
   Write to: Staatsarchive at Marburg/Lahn, Hesse, West Germany
   Bavarians: Write to: Heeres Archiv at Munich, Bavaria, West Germany

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN WEST & EAST GERMANY (con't) by Gladys Muller

Additional References

How to:

Searching for Your German Ancestors by Eschenbach
How to Find My German Ancestors & Relatives by Heinz F. Friederichs
A Genealogical & Demographic Handbook of German Handwriting by Storrer/Jensen
A Genealogical Handbook of German Research by Jensen

References:

Encyclopedia of German-American Genealogical Research by Smith & Smith
Migration, Emigration, Immigration by Miller
Germany - an LDS Research Paper

Maps & Gazetteers:

Meyers Orts- und Verkehr-Lexikon - on LDS microfilm
Müllers Grosses Deutsches Ortsbuch by Müller
Der Grosse Shell Atlas
Karte Des Deutschen Reiches - detailed maps on LDS microfilm #068,814
The Atlantic Bridge to Germany by Hall - 5 volumes
German Boundrey & Locality Name Changes - LDS Research Paper

Name changes of German towns located outside current borders of Germany:

Deutsche Fremdsprachiges Ortnamenverzeichnis - LDS microfilm #583,457
Covers France, Denmark, Belgium and Polish Corridor
Deutsche Ortgebiete unter Fremder Verwaltung Ortsnamenverzeichnis
LDS microfilm #824,243 - Covers Poland

Emigration Records & Passenger Lists:

The German Element in the United States by Faust (17th Century)
Bibliography of German Immigration in Colonial Times of the Pennsylvania Germans & Their Descendants by Meynen (18th Century)
Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration by Knittle
Emigrants from Wuerttemberg - The Adolf Gerber Lists (18th Century)
American Genealogical Resources in German Archives by Smith & Smith
Hamburg Passenger Lists - LDS Research Paper
Passenger Lists of Ships Coming to North America 1607-1825 by Lancour
Bibliography of Ship Passenger Lists 1538-1900 edited by Filby
Passenger & Immigration Lists Index by Filby

Dictionaries:

Central European Genealogical Terminology by Suess
The New Cassell's German Dictionary (Latin & French also)
201 German Verbs (Latin & French also)

Name Books:

Deutsche Namenkunde by Max Gottschald
Deutsches Namenlexikon by Hans Bahlow

GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH IN WEST & EAST GERMANY (con't) by Gladys Muller

6. Emigration Records & Passenger Lists
   Hamburg Passenger Lists (1850-1934)
   Indexes & Passenger Lists on LDS microfilm
   Arrivals in Philadelphia (1727-1775)
   See: Pennsylvania German Pioneers by Strassburger-Hinke
   Emigration Lists from various German States (17th through 20th Century)
   Most on LDS microfilm
   Write State Archives: For addresses see book by Wellauer in #4
   See Bibliography for additional references

7. Genealogies
   Deutsches Geschlechterbuch - 156 volumes; indexed
   Genealogisches Handbuch des Adels - 58 volumes
   Deutsche Ortssippenbücher (German Town Family Books) - on LDS microfilm

8. Heraldry
   Siebmachen-schen Wappenbüchern by Hanns Jäger-Sunstenau - 119 volumes
   Address to: Deutsche Adelsarchiv, Friedrichsplatz 15, Marburg, W. Germany

Letter Writing

Salutation to a pastor: Sehr geehrter Herr Pfarrer
Salutation to an official: Sehr geehrter Herren
Suggested opening sentence: Ich kann deutsch lesen aber ich kann nicht es schreiben, also schreibe ich auf englisch. (I can read German but can't write it; therefore, I am writing in English.)
The body of the letter may be in English. Avoid slang and idioms. Be direct and concise. Use simple declarative sentences. Try to use verbs in the present or past tense only. Use many "pleases" and "thank yous".
In closing try: Herzlich Grüssen zu der Heimat meiner Vorfahren. (Friendly greetings to the land of my forebearers.)
Complimentary Close: Hochachtungsvoll (Yours truly) & your signature

Enclose two International Postal Coupons with each letter for an airmail response.
Do not send money. Offer to pay for the research. Payment may be made with either a personal check or International Money Order.

Special instructions for East Germany only:
The address must read: Deutsche Demokratische Republik or DDR (never use "East Germany")
Write only to pastors. Ask them for a complete genealogy of the emigrant ancester (male & female lines; brothers & sisters) as far back as the records go. There may never be an opportunity for a second letter.
Offer to pay for the research. Payment may be made with B of A International Money Order only.

Societies & Libraries

Immigrant Library - 5043 Lankershim Blvd., No Hollywood, CA 91601
German Research Association - PO Box 11293, San Diego, CA 92111
Palatines to America - 157 North State St., Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Genealogical Research in East and West Germany
Speaker: Gladys Muller

In order to successfully complete German ancestoral research, the American researcher must be cognizant of the name of the parish in Germany from which the ancestor came. The researcher must also be aware of the fact that town names in Germany are repeated; that is, the name of a town may appear in various locations throughout Germany.

Much research can and must be completed in the United States prior to contacting Germany. This will save much time, effort, and money.

There are several resources easily available in local genealogical research libraries (e.g., Los Angeles Temple Library, Los Angeles Public Library, Huntington Beach Public Library), as well as the fine collection of original and resource materials available at the Temple Library in Salt Lake City, Utah, that should be consulted before source research in Germany. The bibliography attached provides a list of books not to be overlooked.

When pinpointing exact ancestoral residence locations in Germany, the researcher should consult a German zip code book and Meyers Orts- und Verkehr-Lexikon, which will name all German towns, even the smallest villages, and pinpoint the exact location.

The researcher should also become aware of location terminology. For example, where is Hesse? Brunswick? When referencing Prussia, frequently the reference is to the entire Prussian empire.

Demographic studies become important when clarifying the time period the ancestor came to the United States. When the time period has been clarified, determining what records may be available follows. For example: the time period 1820 to 1850 was the second largest time period of immigration to the United States. Land ownership was a primary desire, and when the land question became hopeless in Germany, immigrants came to the United States where they were optimistic in the purchase of land.

Most of the records available in Germany are recorded in parish records. Parish records, which may be very carefully detailed and expertly kept, include baptismal, marriage, and burial records.

A number of places kept housebooks, which recorded the house number, and the names of people who ever lived or were born in the house.

Some individuals kept family books, recording a continuous family history of birth, marriage, and death by surname.

Civil records were mandated beginning in the 1860s; however, some areas kept civil records as early as the 1700s. However, the researcher should begin searching with parish records.

Census records are not available for use. City directories and tax records can be helpful. They will be filed with the civil records.

Record filming has been done by Salt Lake City, but only when the records have been called from the parish into archives.

When doing archival research, it may be difficult to determine where the oldest records are kept; it is best to write to city archives.

Immigration/Emmigration records, some of which are indexed, begin in the 1850s. Hamburg and Braemen were the chief ports from which the Germans left the country for the United States.

If the researcher is searching a unique surname, the researcher should consult recent telephone directories.

When the researcher knows the town of origin of the ancestor, the researcher may find it helpful to write the postmaster of the town, telling him of the desire to correspond with someone in the area with the same surname.

Often when an individual immigrates from Germany to the United States, he would need a permit to leave the country. In that case, such records are often filed in the state archives near the immigrant ancestor's home town.

In East Germany, when writing for information, the researcher must request everything desired at one time. The researcher will not be able to correspond back and forth with the contact in East Germany. Since the name EAST GERMANY is a term applied to that area of Germany by the United States, EAST GERMANY should <u>never</u> appear as part of the address on the envelope.