

Volga German Genealogy Research:

Documenting Your
Ancestors Lives in America
and Canada

CENTER FOR VOLGA GERMAN STUDIES
PORTLAND, OREGON

Maggie's Volga German Genealogy Research Guide

Several years ago, I started thinking about preparing a guidebook that would be helpful to someone who was just starting to research their Volga German ancestors. The original plan was to provide tips on how to do genealogy research, working backwards in time, starting with records in America, then to records in Russia, and then to records in Germany. The emphasis would be on materials that would be most useful to someone whose ancestors were Germans who immigrated to Russia in the 1763-1767 time frame. The first part, records in America, was published as a series of posts on several Facebook pages in 2015 and 2016. The second part, records in Russia, and the third part, records in Germany, were developed into presentations that I have given at several CVGS and AHSGR conferences. At some point, I hope to summarize those presentations in written form, but that will require more work. Rather than wait until I get around to that, here is part about doing research in America. This consists primarily of the Facebook posts along with some of the associated images. This isn't a completely exhaustive analysis of every possible source that might provide information about your ancestors, but it does cover the basic sources that will be useful to most people who are researching Volga German ancestors.

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Part 1: Document your ancestor's lives in America

a. Start with what you know

Have you always wanted to research your ancestors, but didn't know where to start? Start with what you know. There are two standard genealogy forms that will help you organize what you already know. One is called a "Pedigree Chart" and the other is called a "Family Group Sheet". There are links to .pdf files of the forms below. Starting with the "Pedigree Chart", fill in your own name and personal data on the left hand side of the page. Then fill in the data for your parents, then your grandparents, then your great-grandparents. If there are any items missing, for example you don't know someone's marriage date, or you don't know where someone was born, those are facts that you are going to research and fill in later. If you already know everything back to all of your great-grandparents, start a new sheet for each great-grandparent, repeating the same process for each great-grandparent. The "Family Group Sheet" is a way to organize what you know about a specific married couple. For example, pick one set of your grandparents. Fill in all of the information that you know about your grandfather and grandmother, and then fill in all of the names of their children (your aunts and uncles). Again, if you are missing any dates or places, these are the items that you are going to find as you research. At some point, you are going to accumulate enough data that you will want to put all of this information in a computerized genealogy program, but you don't need to worry about that right now. Your first step is to identify what facts you already know and what facts you are missing. (If you are already using genealogy software, you can print these reports from your genealogy software.)

<https://www.ancestrycdn.com/legacy/pdf/trees/charts/anchart.pdf>

<https://www.ancestrycdn.com/legacy/pdf/trees/charts/famgrec.pdf>

<https://www.ancestry.com/cs/charts-and-forms>

b. Interview the elders in your family

Now is the time to approach your senior family members to ask if you can interview them. I am extremely lucky that I have two older cousins (one on my mother's side and one on my father's side) who both had a life-long interest in family history. They both had interviewed our older family members and made careful notes of what they were told. Because they had expressed an interest in the elder family member's lives, those cousins were the ones who were entrusted with the care of not just the memories, but also the collections of letters and photographs that those older family members had accumulated. You need to be that person in your family. You need to reach out to your elders and ask them about their lives, and ask them about the family stories they were told when they were younger. The people in your family tree are just a list of names and dates without the context of your ancestor's lives. Here are a couple of articles from Family Tree Magazine that provides some ideas about how to interview your family members:

<http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/13tips-for-oral-history-interviewing>

<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/20-questions/>

<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/9-tips-interviewing-relatives/>

c. 1. Names and spelling

Before we talk about different kinds of documents and where to find them, we need to talk about names and spelling. First, our Volga German ancestors were not very creative with names. There were a very limited set of first names that were used over and over again. If a child died, it was not unusual for the next child of the same gender to be given that same name.

Typically children were named after their baptismal sponsors, and the sponsors were usually a family member. That leads to the same names being used over and over again in the same family. For example, I have 85 men named Jacob Bauer in my database. When you find a record with your ancestor's name, don't automatically assume it is the correct person. You also need to look at the person's age, residence, spouse, and other facts to

German Alphabet					
Aa	Ää	Bb	ß	Cc	Dd
ah	ah Umlaut	beh	ess-testt	tseh	deh
Ee	Ff	Gg	Hh	Ii	Jj
eh	eff	geh	ha	ee	yot
Kk	Ll	Mm	Nn	Oo	Öö
kah	ell	emm	enn	oh	oh umlaut
Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt	Uu
peh	kuh	err	ess	teh	uh
Üü	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	Zz
uh Umlaut	fow	veh	iks	upsilon	tsett

confirm you have found the right person. Second, don't get too hung up on spellings. Before our modern era of Social Security cards and other identification that established the way our

names would be spelled for the rest of our lives, spelling was flexible. In our Volga German context, you have the added complication of names being transliterated into Russian and then transliterated back to German or English. Russian and German both have several letters that do not have direct English equivalents, and English has a few letters that don't have a Russian equivalent. If you are looking at Russian documents, or documents that have been translated from Russian, you should expect spelling variations.

Russian alphabet with Latin transliteration and IPA transcription											
А а	Б б	В в	Г г	Д д	Е е	Ё ё	Ж ж	З з	И и	Й й	
a	b	v	g	d	e/ye	ë/yë	ž/zh	z	i	j/ly	
[a]	[b]	[v]	[g]	[d]	[je/e]	[jo/o]	[ʒ]	[z]	[i]	[j]	
К к	Л л	М м	Н н	О о	П п	Р р	С с	Т т	У у	Ф ф	
k	l	m	n	o	p	r	s	t	u	f	
[k]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[o]	[p]	[r]	[s]	[t]	[u]	[f]	
Х х	Ц ц	Ч ч	Ш ш	Щ щ	Ъ ъ	Ы ы	Ь ь	Э э	Ю ю	Я я	
kh/h/x	c/ts/tc	č/ch	š/sh	šč/shch	''	y	'	é/e/eh	ju/yu/iu	ja/ya/ia	
[x]	[ts]	[tʃ]	[ʃ]	[ʂʂ/ʂʂʂ]	-	[ɨ]	[ʲ]	[ɛ]	[ju/ʲu]	[ja/ʲa]	

German also has several extra letters that we do not have in English, which will result in spelling variations. Don't assume that a variant spelling automatically means that it is a different family.

c. 2. Collect the documents

What am I talking about when I say "documents"?

Now that you have written down what you know, and have begun interviewing family members, you are ready to start gathering documents. You have two goals here. First, you want to verify the facts that you have already written down, and second, you want to find the names, dates, and places that you are missing. By documents, what am I talking about? I am talking about records that memorialize each event in your ancestor's lives. The primary records are those that document Birth, Marriage, and Death. In addition, you will look for Census, Naturalization, and Military records. There are other records that you may find along the way, such as Deeds, Wills and Probate records. Right now you want to get organized and figure out

what you already have. You probably have your own birth certificate. You might have your parents' marriage license, and if your parents are deceased you probably have copies of their obituaries and death certificates. How about your grandparents? What kind of records do you have for them? Take some time to gather what you already have, match it up with what you wrote down on your Pedigree Chart and Family Group sheets, and make a list of what you are missing.

c. 3. What is and is not on the internet

Isn't everything available for free on the Internet? Don't we all wish that were true! As an example of what you can find on the free search site Family Search, I ran a search on my grandfather, Heinrich (Henry) Hein. The image below is the result of that search. You can see that it brought up quite a few items. There are multiple references to the same obituary, a Find-A-Grave reference, my grandmother's obituary, the 1910, 1920, and 1940 census (1930 is missing), and a reference to the Alien Case Files. What is missing? His marriage license, his WWI draft registration, his Social Security number application, the actual Alien registration file, his death certificate, and his probate files. If I run the same search on Ancestry (a subscription service), I am still not going to get some items, like the marriage license, the death certificate, the Alien file, and the probate files. An internet search is a great place to start, but it isn't going to answer all of your questions, or provide all of your documents.

Preview	Name	Events	Relationships	Details	Image
Henry Hein United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2002	birth: 12 August 1880 Frank, Russia obituary: July 1962 Fort Morgan	spouse: Alice Engelman children: Mrs Helen Stone, Maria French, Elmer, Russell other: Edith Scheibel, George			
Henry Hein United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2002	birth: 12 August 1880 Frank, Russia obituary: 28 July 1962 Fort Morgan, Colorado	father: Jacob Hein mother: Katherine Laga Hein spouse: Anna Elizabeth Or Adler Or Alice Engelman children: Mrs Helen Stone, Mrs Maria French, Elmer, Russell other: Foster Fred Schwenker, George, Mrs Edith Scheibel, Martha Schuler			
Henry Hein United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2002	birth: 12 August 1880 Frank, Russia obituary: 18 July 1962 Ft Morgan, Colorado	father: Jacob Hein mother: Katherine Laga children: Henry, Mrs Edith Scheibel other: Mary Schuler Strub, Alice Engelman, Mrs Helen Strub, Mrs Maria Frick, Elmer Hein, Russell Hein...			
<p>The following results don't strongly match what you searched for, but may be of interest.</p> <p>Don't Spend a Dime With a FamilySearch Account, you'll always have full access. Get a Free Account</p>					
Henry Hein Find A Grave Index	birth: 1880 death: 1962 Fort Morgan, Morgan, Colorado, United States of America	spouse: Alice Engelman children: Mrs Helen Stone, Mrs Maria French, Elmer, Russell other: Mrs Edith Scheibel, George, Newman Fred Schwenker			
Henry Hein United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2002	birth: 12 August 1880 Frank, Russia obituary: July 1962	spouse: Mrs Alice Hein other: Rosemarie Arthur ODB			
Heinrich Hein Father United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2002		child: Katherine Elizabeth Heil other: Katherine Laub Hein, Edward Heil, Mrs Hilgauer Foss, Mrs Maida Klein, Melvin, Vernon...			
Heinrich Hein Other relatives United States, Obituaries, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, 1899-2002		child: Katherine Elizabeth Hein Heil other: Katherine Laub Hein, Edward Heil, Mrs Hilgauer Foss, Mrs Maida Klein, Melvin, Vernon...			
Henry Hein Head United States Census, 1940	birth: 1880 Russia residence: 1940 Culbertson, Culbertson Election Precinct, Hitchcock, Nebraska, United States	father: Henry Hein spouse: Alice Hein			
Henry Hein Head United States Census, 1920	birth: 1880 Russia residence: 1920 Culbertson, Hitchcock, Nebraska, United States immigration: 1892	spouse: Alice Hein children: Ester M Hein, Viola D Hein, Gladys L Hein, Alice C Hein, Herman D Hein, Lorence L D Hein, Henry A Hein			
Henry Hein Head United States Census, 1910	birth: 1880 Russia residence: 1910 Culbertson, Hitchcock, Nebraska, United States immigration: 1892	spouse: Alice Hein children: Esther M Hein, Viola D Hein, Gladys R Hein, Elmer C Hein			
Henry Hein United States, Index to Alien Case Files, 1940-2003	birth: 12 August 1880	other: John Wacker			
Heinrich Hein United States, Directories, Census, Birth, Marriage, Death, United States, 1850-1950	birth: Dobinski				

c. 4. Types of Genealogy Documents

i. Census records.

The easiest records for U.S. researchers to find are U.S. Census records. For Canadian researchers, many years of Canadian census records are also available. For Argentine

researchers of Volga Germans, the 1895 census is available. Images and indexes of census records can be found on a variety of genealogy web sites. Family Search is a free source, Ancestry is a paid subscription service. Knowing where your family was living at various points in time will help you locate other records such as birth and death records. Additionally, in the case of the U.S. census, there is quite a bit of useful data on the census in addition to names, ages, and birth locations. The 1910 U.S. census reports how many years the couple has been married, how many children the wife has had, the place of birth of the person's parents, what year the person immigrated, and whether the person has applied for and received U.S. Citizenship. The 1920 U.S. census also reports immigration year and citizenship status, and includes the person's mother tongue, and the mother tongue of the person's parents. Start with the most recently available census year, which is 1940 in the case of the U.S. census. Search for all of your family members who were alive in that year. Make sure to view and save the actual image, not just the index. The indexes do not include everything that is on the census images, and it is not unusual for errors to occur in the indexing, so you really need to save or print out a good quality image of the census page. Work your way back through the years until you get to the first census after your immigrant ancestor arrived.

Nebraska
Adams

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE AND LABOR—BUREAU OF THE CENSUS
THIRTEENTH CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES: 1910—POPUL

P OR OTHER DIVISION OF COUNTY [Insert proper name and, also, name of place, or township, town, precinct, block, hamlet, tract, etc. See instructions.] NAME OF INCORPORATED PLACE Hastings City

NAME OF INSTITUTION [Insert name of institution, if any, and indicate the house in which the entries are made. See instructions.] ENUMERATED BY ME ON THE 28th DAY OF

1	2	3	4	PERSONAL DESCRIPTION							NATIVITY			15	16	17	18
				5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14				
189-195	Schaefer	Gonna	Wife	F	W	44	M	1	37	1	1	Gen German	Gen German	Gen German	1881	English	No
		Conrad	Head	M	W	44	M	1	23			Russ German	Russ German	Russ German	1887	English	Own
		Kate	Wife	F	W	42	M	1	23	0	0	Russ German	Russ German	Russ German	1887	English	No
189-196	Hein	Henry	Head	M	W	29	M	1	6			Russ German	Russ German	Russ German	1901	English	Lab
		Allice	Wife	F	W	24	M	1	6	3	3	Russ German	Russ German	Russ German	1889	English	No
		Marie H	Daughter	F	W	5						Washington	Russ German	Russ German			No
		Helen	Daughter	F	W	2						Washington	Russ German	Russ German			No
		Lubin	Daughter	F	W	2						Colorado	Russ German	Russ German			No
190-197	Apost	Ludwig	Head	M	W	32	M	1	30			Russ German	Russ German	Russ German	1884	English	Fore
		Madeline	Wife	F	W	52	M	1	30	9	7	Russ German	Russ German	Russ German	1891	English	No
		George	Son	M	W	16						Nebraska	Russ German	Russ German		English	Lab
		Adam	Son	M	W	14						Nebraska	Russ German	Russ German		English	No
191-198	Baker	Wesley	Head	M	W	41	M	1	0			Iowa	Denmark	Oslo		English	Learn
		Kate	Wife	F	W	16	M	1	0	0	0	Nebraska	Gen German	German		English	No

c. 4. i. Census records

A. Argentina Census

If you are researching people who migrated to Argentina, the 1895 Argentina census is available on Family Search. If you have an Ancestry subscription, the Argentina Census is available there also.

Argentina 1895 National Census on Family Search:

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1410078?collectionNameFilter=false>

Argentina 1895 National Census on Ancestry:

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=9773>

All Argentina, National Census, 1895 results for Hein

Search Filters

Hein

BORN: Russia

[Edit Search](#) [New Search](#) [UPDATE](#)

[All Categories](#)

> [Census & Voter Lists](#)

> [1890s](#)

Argentina, National Census, 1895 (in Spanish)

This collection covers the second national census of Argentina, taken in 1895.

[Learn more about this database...](#)

[Browse Individual Records](#)

Shortcut Keys ▶

Results 1-20 of 40

View Record	Name	Birth Date	Birth Place	Residence Place	View Images
View Record	Antonio Hein	abt 1856	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Diamante, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	
View Record	Nicolas Hein	abt 1877	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Diamante, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	
View Record	Jacob Hein	abt 1885	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Diamante, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	
View Record	Antonio Hein	abt 1887	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Diamante, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	
View Record	Maria Ainz	abt 1877	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Diamante, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	
View Record	Maria De Hein	abt 1872	Brasilera	Partido Arrecifes, Buenos Aires, Argentina	
View Record	Teodoro Hahn	abt 1847	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Paraná, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	
View Record	Justina Hahn	abt 1855	Rusia (Russia)	Departamento Paraná, Entre Rios (Entre Rios), Argentina	

c. 4. i. Census records

B. Canada Census

For those of you who are researching ancestors who immigrated to Canada, there are a good selection of census records available to you. This page on the Family Search web site includes a chart that shows what years of census records are available at which web site. The chart includes links which will take you to the search page for each census. There are links to both free sources (Family Search and Library & Archives Canada) and subscription sources (Ancestry).

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Canada_Census

1901 Census of Canada for Johan Koch												
Manitoba > Lisgar > Rhineland												
Description de la Personne.							Citoyenneté, Nationalité et Religion.					
Nom de chaque personne dans la famille ou le ménage, le 31 Mars, 1901.	Sexe.	Coûleur.	Relation de parenté ou autre avec le chef de famille ou du ménage.	Célibataire, marié, en veuvage ou divorcé.	Mois et date de naissance.	Année de naissance.	Pays ou lieu de naissance. (Si c'est en Canada spécifier la province ou territoire, et ajoutez "r" pour rural et "u" pour urbain, selon le cas.)	Année d'immigration au Canada.	Année de naturalisation.	Origine, selon la race ou la tribu.	Nationalité.	Religion.
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Koch Johan	M	W	Husband	M	10 June	1865 39	Russia	1899		German	Russian	Lutheran
" Elisabeth	F	"	Wife	M	16 January	1871 30	"	"	"	"	"	"
" Elizabeth	F	"	Daughter	L	12 June	1894 6 1/2	"	"	"	"	"	"
" Emilge	F	"	"	L	15 November	1899 1 1/2	"	"	"	"	"	"
" Johannes	M	"	Son	L	28 April	1900 1 1/2	"	"	"	"	Canadian	"
Chernish Abraham	M	"	Head	M	7 April	1865 37	Russia	1877	1887	"	Canadian	Muslim
" Katherine	F	"	Wife	M	17 March	1865 36	"	"	"	"	"	"
" Maria	F	"	Daughter	L	28 August	1887 13 1/2	"	"	"	"	"	"
" Helena	F	"	"	L	28 August	1889 13 1/2	"	"	"	"	"	"

c. 4. i. Census records

C. United States Census

For those of you who are researching ancestors who immigrated to the United States, a census was taken in the United States every ten years, beginning in 1790. The most recent census that has been released to the public is the 1940 census. Our Volga German ancestors began to arrive in the U.S. in the mid-1870s, so the records you will be interested in are the 1880-1940 census. Unfortunately, the 1890 census was destroyed in a fire. Here is the link to the Family Search page that lists the available census records and provides links to access various web sites where these records can be found:

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/United_States_Census_Online_Genealogy_Records

c. 4. i. Census Records

D. State Census

Many U.S. States have their own census records. If you can't find your ancestor in the Federal census, check to see if there is a state census for the place where they might have been living. This is especially useful for ancestors who came to the U.S. early in the immigration period. For example, some of the earliest Volga German immigrants to the U.S. settled in Nebraska and Kansas in 1875-1876. If your ancestor arrived in the 1880s, you are not going to find them in a Federal census until 1900 because the 1890 Federal census was destroyed. However, if your ancestor settled in Kansas, you can locate them in the 1885 and 1895 Kansas census. The image below is an example of a German-from-Russia family in the 1885 Nebraska census. Here is a link to the Family Search page about State census records, which includes links to the various state census records.

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Census_State_Censuses

Nebraska State Census, 1885 ▾ Franklin ▸ North Franklin ▸ Population ▸

Image 6 of 9

Open in a new window | Print | Download | Tools

House Number	Family Number	Name of each Person whose place of abode, on 1st day of June, 1885, was in this family	Sex-Male, M.; Female, F.	Age at last birthday prior to June 1, 1885. If under 1 year and under 15, state month and day.	Relationship of each person to the head of this family—Wife, daughter, son, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, or other.	Single, /; Married, /; Widowed, /; Divorced, /; Married during Census year, /.	Profession, Occupation or Trade of each person, male or female.	Is the person (on the day of the Enumerator's visit) sick, or temporarily disabled so as to be unable to attend to ordinary business or duties, as, was in the sick, lame or disabled.	Is the person (on the day of the Enumerator's visit) blind, deaf and dumb, idiotic, insane, or otherwise mentally deficient, or otherwise physically or mentally disabled.	Place of Birth of this person, stating state or Territory of United States, or the Country, if of foreign birth.	Place of Birth of the father of this person, stating the State or Territory of United States, or the Country, if of foreign birth.	Place of Birth of the mother of this person, stating the State or Territory of United States, or the Country, if of foreign birth.
54	55	Koch, Henry M.	M	57			farmer			Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Catherine W.	F	55	wife		house house			Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Katie W.	F	17	daughter		servant			Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Peter W.	M	14	son		laborer			Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Fred W.	M	11	son		laborer			Russia	Russ.	Russ.
55	56	Koch, Alexander W.	M	34						Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Eliza W.	F	32	wife		house house			Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Mother W.	F	12	daughter					Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Andrew W.	M	10	son					Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Henry W.	M	7	son					Russia	Russ.	Russ.
		Mary W.	F	5	daughter					Nebraska	Russ.	Russ.
		the W.	F	2	daughter					Nebraska	Russ.	Russ.

Image Index Information

c. 4 ii. City Directories

You have searched the census records, and you just can't find your great-grandfather, even though you know he should be there. What do you do to confirm that he was living where you think he was living? Look at City Directories for the place where your ancestors lived. Years before having a telephone at home was common, local directories were published, listing household names and addresses, and including local businesses. The example here are my gr-gr-grandparents, Friedrich Engelman and Maria Koch. In the 1893 Hastings, Nebraska, Directory, several members of my family, including my gr-gr-grandfather, are listed. When I look at the 1898 directory, my gr-gr-grandmother is listed as "widow of Fred". That tells me that Fred died sometime between 1893 and 1898. Where do you find City Directories? Do an internet search to see if the directories you are looking for are available for free on a public-access site (such as Archive.org). If you can't find what you are looking for on a free site, there is a subscription web site called Fold3, which has a nice collection of city directories. There are also some city directories on Ancestry, and of course the Family History Library has a collection also. In addition, you might find that your local library or genealogy society has old city directories in their holdings or on microfilm.

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ARTIFICIAL EYES
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HASTINGS.

CITY DIRECTORY. 67

Edwards Laura A Mrs, physician 611 N Burlington ave, tel 9, res same
Edwards Lynn S, stenographer C E Higinbotham, res 611 N Burlington ave
Eigenberg John H, clk W S Dieken, res 702 S Hastings ave
Eiert Emma Miss, domestic, 802 N St Joe ave
Ekeal Christian, domestic, 907 N Kansan ave
Eldery Mollie Mrs, res 209 S Kansas ave
E dredge Arthur H, second hand store 818 W 2d, res 207 N Kansas ave
Eldredge Mahala C Mrs, res 207 N Kansas ave
Elks Cafe, Mrs S M York prop, 101 N Lincoln ave, (see right bottom lines)
Elks Lodge No 159, (see page 16)
Ellis Amelia R Miss, res 521 S Kansas ave
Ellis Anna Mrs, res 723 Saunders ave
Ellis Charles L, bricklayer, res 723 Saunders ave
Ellis David P, farm lab, res Kansas ave and D
Ellis James K, agt Anheuser-Busch Brewing association and Jos Schlitz Brewing Co, retail wines and liquors, billiards and restaurant 106 N Hastings ave, tel 153, [see right bottom lines]
Ellis Jerusha A Mrs, res 104 N Hastings ave
Ellis Samuel A, contractor and builder, res 723 Saunders ave
Elv Ann J Mrs, carpet weaver, res 615 W South
Ely Isaac, engineer, res 515 W South
Ely Isaac L, engineer Kendall & Smith, res 400 S Hastings ave
Ely Laura, res 400 S Hastings ave
Emanuel church of the Evangelical Association (see page 14)
Emdia Daniel C, express messenger F E & M V R R, res 321 N Burlington ave
Emdia Mathilda A Mrs, res 321 N Burlington ave
Engel Louisa Miss, res 1502 W 7th
Engelman Marie Mrs, res 400 S Baltimore ave
Engelman Mary Mrs, res 403 S Baltimore ave
Engelman Fred, res 400 S Baltimore ave
Engelman Friederick, lab, res 403 S Baltimore ave
Engelman Peter, lab, res 403 S Baltimore ave
Engerman Augusta Mrs, res 726 S Bellevue ave
Engerman John, lab, B & M R R, res 726 S Bellevue ave
Engham Estello Mrs, res 527 S Denver ave

J. K. ELLIS, ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWING ASSOCIATION
Wholesale Dealer
106 N. Hastings, Ave.
Tel. 153.

And Jos. Schlitz Keg and Bottle Beer.
Tel. 153.

1893-1894

Nye & Schneider Co. Lumber, Grain, Hogs, Hard and Soft Coal.
Cor. A and Burlington, Hastings, Neb.
Edwards McAvoy's 1898-1899 Directory. Ernst 37

Queen City Repair Shop,
Look Smithing, Key Fitting,
Electric Bells, Batteries, Etc.
EXPERT WORK AT REASONABLE PRICES.

Edwards Laura Dr. 611 n Burlington
Edwards Roy, r 611 n Burlington
Edwards Wm. A. brake FE & M V R R r 753 n Lexington
Edwards Wm. H. r 422 n St Joe
Egan Thos. baggage r 321 Briggs
Egelhoff Luther, barber 510 w 2d r 407 s St Joe
Eigenberg Carl, r 816 s Colorado
Eigenberg J. Henry, clk C K Lawson & Co r 702 s Hastings
Elberte James, stage mgr Kerr Opera House rms 103 n Denver
Eldredge Arthur H. ins r 210 n Lexington
Eldridge John, bottler r 919 w 2d
Elinor James E, tel opr B & M R R r 1133 w 4th
Elks Hall, 113 n Hastings
Elks Social Club, 113 n Hastings, S S Snyder sec and treas
Elliott Frank, r 303 s Denver
Ellis Clyde C. carp r 108 n Lexington
Ellis C. Lewis, bricklyr r 108 n Lexington
Ellis Mabel, cigarmkr Snyder & Brewer r 108 n Lexington
Ellis Samuel A. contr 108 n Lexington
Ely Isaac L. engr Main Bros r 415 s St Joe
Emberson Myrtle R. Mrs. steno 113 n Hastings r 753 n Denver
Endelman Fred. G. trav r 516 w 4th
Engel Louisa, dressmkr r 1502 w 7th
Engelman Carl, lab r 401 Chicago
Engelman Mary, wid Fred r 401 s Baltimore
Engleman Wm. clk F G Russell r 1022 w 7th
Enstam Sophia, r 757 n Kansas av
Eppens Fred. lab r 605 w 3d
Erdmann Emma, cigarmkr Snyder & Brewer r 315 s Bellvue
Erdmann Gustav, grocer 317 s Bellvue r 315 s Bellvue
Erdmann Henry Mrs. r 102 e 6th
Erdmann Martha, cigarmkr Snyder & Brewer r 315 s Bellvue
Ernst Magdalena, wid Jacob r 323 Sewell

Burlington Route
Best Line to St. Joseph, Kansas City and St. Louis.
Union Depot connections at Kansas City and St. Louis for all points south and southeast.
J. C. SWARTZ, Agent, Hastings, Neb.

1898-1899

c. 4. iii. Obituaries

A. 1. Reading old-style German fonts

Can you read this obituary, published in a German-Language newspaper here in the U.S.? If yes, great! You can read obituaries (or anything else) printed in the German-Language newspapers here in North and South America, including those that were widely read by the Volga German population on both continents. If you can't read this obituary, you have a little bit of homework to do. The first step is to familiarize yourself with the font that these newspapers were printed in. The font is called "Fraktur". This is the type-written version of "Gothic" German handwriting. Here is a link to a chart of the "Fraktur" letters from the BYU German Script Tutorial web site. You might find it helpful to print out the chart, study it, and see if you can convert this obituary into modern English letters. Remember that an "a", "o" or "u" with an umlaut over it (that's the two little dots) is not the same as that letter without the umlauts. The German alphabet has 4 extra letters: the three umlauted vowels, plus the eszett (that's the character that looks like a "B" with a tail), which is equivalent to a double-s.

<https://script.byu.edu/Pages/German/en/fraktur.aspx>

Heinrich Koch (sein Vater hieß Jacob) wurde geboren am 16. Februar 1860 zu Kolb, Rußland, und starb am 18. Dezember 1927 in seiner Wohnung zu Hastings, Nebr., im Alter von 67 Jahren, 10 Monaten und 2 Tagen. Während der Verstorbenen sich mit Freunden gemütlich unterhielt, starb er ganz plötzlich an Herzschlag. — Seine erste Ehe schloß er mit Anna Elisabeth geb. Manz. Neun Kinder wurden in dieser Ehe geboren; fünf derselben starben frühe. In 1899 kam er mit seiner Familie nach Amerika und wohnte meistens in Hastings und Cample, Nebr. Im Jahre 1919 starb ihm seine erste Gattin. In demselben Jahre ehelichte er Frau Wilhelm Koch, eine geborene Kraus. (Wilhelm Koch war der Bruder des Heinrich Koch und starb vor 11 Jahren auf denselben Tag und an derselben Krankheit.) Er hinterläßt seine Gattin, drei Söhne und eine Tochter.

Hastings, Nebr.

J. G. Ament, Pastor.

c. 4. iii. Obituaries

A. 2. Terminology commonly used in German-language obituaries

There were many German-language newspapers published here in the U.S. Some of the obituaries that will be necessary for your research may have been printed in the German language. You do not have to be fluent in German to read an obituary. You will have to know the German words for terms that commonly appear in an obituary – relationships (parent, spouse, sibling, child), events (birth, marriage, immigration, death), numbers, and dates. There

are numerous books you can purchase, and many web sites that list common German genealogical words. The links below are just two of the numerous web sites that have fairly good lists of terminology. These lists are not comprehensive, but should cover many of the important words that you would find in the typical obituary. For single words and short phrases, typing into Google translate is an option also.

http://genealogy.about.com/od/germany/p/word_list.htm

<http://www.rollroots.com/symbol.htm>

c. 4. iii. Obituaries

A. AHSGR Obituary Collection on Family Search

The American Historical Society of Germans from Russia (AHSGR) has amassed a large collection of obituaries. There are more than 455,000 obituary images in this collection. If your ancestors were Volga German, it is likely that you will find an obituary for a family member in this collection. Several years ago, the collection was transferred to the Family Search web site, and is currently being indexed. Most of the English-language obituaries have been indexed, and indexing of the German-language obituaries is well underway. You can search the portion of the collection that has been indexed by following this link to the Family Search web site. It is free to search, and free to download the images.

<https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2367299>

Tips for searching the AHSGR obituary collection:

You can search the AHSGR obituary collection simply by entering a first and last name. You can input only a last name, but if you are searching for a common name, this may generate too many results. You are more likely to find the obituary you are looking for if you input additional details. For example, if you know where or when the person was born, under “Search with a Life Event”, click on “Birth”, and input the year and/or location. (See screen examples on next page). You can do the same with marriage, residence, or death years and locations. If you know the name of a family member, such as spouse or parents, under “Search with a Relationship”, click on the appropriate family member, and input the data you know. Notice that there is a small checkbox next to each input field. If you want to search using an exact spelling for what you have input, check that box. If you want to search for spelling variations, don’t check it.

You should experiment with different combinations of input.

Search Collection

DECEASED ANCESTOR'S NAME

First Names

Last Names

SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT:

Learn more >

Search Collection

DECEASED ANCESTOR'S NAME

First Names Last Names

SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT:

Birth | Marriage | Residence | Death | Any

SEARCH WITH A RELATIONSHIP:

Spouse | Parents | Other Person

SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT:

Birth | Marriage | Residence | Death | Any

SEARCH WITH A RELATIONSHIP:

Spouse | Parents | Other Person

SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT:

Birth | Marriage | Residence | Death | Any

SEARCH WITH A RELATIONSHIP:

Spouse | Parents | Other Person

☐ Match all terms exactly

c. 4. iii. Obituaries

B. Historic Newspapers, including newspaper web sites

Another source for obituaries (and other news items about your ancestors) is Historic Newspapers. There are several challenges with locating historic newspapers. First, not all of the newspapers that have ever existed has been scanned and indexed into an online web site. Second, searching a newspaper web site isn't as easy as searching a genealogy database. Your options for searching tend to be limited to putting in a person's name, and possibly further limiting that by a geographic area and a time frame. I don't want to discourage you from searching these web sites – they can be a great source – I just want you to have realistic expectations about how much of a challenge it might be to find anything. The link below is a web page has an enormous amount of information about using Newspaper Websites. There are lessons on how to do searches, and links to a multitude of other web sites. If you want to devote some time to learning about searching historic newspapers, I think this web page is a good place to start:

<http://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspapers.html>

c. 4. iv. Vital Records

Before we talk about Vital Records, let's pause for a moment and review why we are spending all of this time (and sometimes money) to assemble this collection of documents. Your goal is to have all of the facts – names, dates, places – that you can glean from records here in the U.S. before you attempt to do any research in Russia. When we get into the details of obtaining records in Russia later, you will see why this is the case. The more facts that you have about your ancestors now, the better your chances are of finding relevant records in Russia later. So, what are "Vital Records"? These are official documents generated by a governmental entity. In the U.S., those would be records kept by a State or County Government. Records that fall into

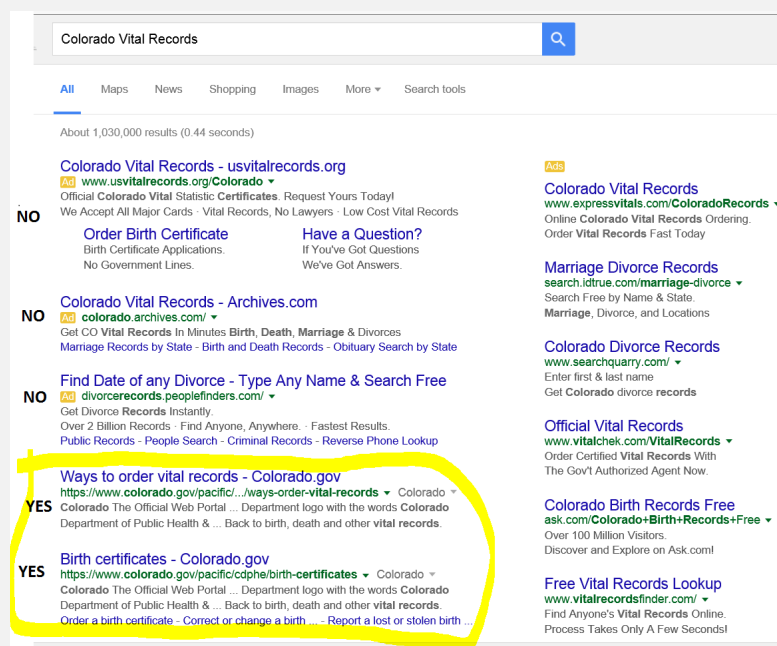
this category are Birth Certificates, Marriage Licenses, and Death Certificates. Vital Records are a somewhat modern invention. Prior to the time that states and counties required reporting of births, marriages, and deaths, the only record of these events typically was a church record. If you are looking for an older record, the first thing you want to do is check to see when Vital Records were first required in the state where your ancestor lived. This Family Search Wiki has links to various state pages that will tell you what vital records might exist for the states that you are researching.

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/United_States_Vital_Records

c. 4. iv. Vital Records

A. Where to Find Vital Records

Some States and Counties have provided their archival Vital Records to the big online genealogy web sites (such as Family Search and Ancestry). You might get lucky and discover that the image for a vital record that you need is available on one of these web sites. It is certainly worth searching those sites first to see what is there. However, for many vital records, you are going to need to contact the State or County Vital Records department to obtain these records. The simplest way to find the contact information for a particular vital records departments is a Google search. Say for example I wanted to know how to get a death certificate for someone who died in Colorado. I would Google “Colorado Vital Records”. DO NOT choose the results that say “Ad” in front of them. These are commercial services that are going to charge you an extra fee. The least expensive option is to go directly to the State or County. Each locality has different procedures and forms to fill out, and the cost per record varies. Personally, I would go to the County first and see if they have the records. Counties tend to be quicker about responding and sometimes less expensive.



c. 4. iv. Vital Records

B. Discrepancies in dates

As you assemble more documents, you are going to start to see discrepancies in birth dates among the various documents that you assemble. Don't be alarmed by this. There are several reasonable explanations for why this might be the case. Until the Russian Revolution, Russia was still using the Julian ("Old Style") calendar. By the time of the Revolution, Russia was 13 days behind Western Europe and the U.S., which was using the Gregorian ("Western") calendar. Russia switched to the Gregorian calendar in 1918, by jumping from February 1 to February 14 in 1918. Basically, everyone born in Russia before that point lost 13 days. It is not unusual for someone to correct (or attempt to correct) their birth date to account for this. In addition to the differing calendars, problems with dates are caused by the traditional way of recording a person's death. A typical death record states the person's age in terms of how many years, months, and days that the person had lived. It is quite easy to make an error, either in the initial computation, or in later attempting to use that information to compute the person's birth date. Here is an example of a computational error, using my great-grandmother's records: Her death certificate says that she died on 14 April 1924, and that she was 72 years, 4 months, and 18 days old. If you use one of the online calculators to determine her birth date, you get either 26 or 27 Nov 1851 (depending on which calculator you use). However the person who filled out the death certificate says her birth date is 26 Nov 1852. In fact, her birth date is 26 Nov 1853, and I know that because I have an image of the baptism register. Her obituary in Kirchbote also provides the correct birth date of 26 Nov 1853. The bottom line is that once you assemble all of your documents, you may have a range of possible birth dates.

(USUAL PLACE OF BIRTH)			(If deceased give city or town and State)		
Length of residence in city or town where death occurred yrs. mos. ds.			How long in U.S. if of foreign birth? yrs. mos. ds.		
PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS					
3 SEX female	4 COLOR OR RACE white	5 Single, Married, Widowed, or Divorced (write the word) Married	16 DATE OF DEATH (month, day and year) 14 April 1924		
6a If married, widowed or divorced (write name of (or) WIFE of) Jacob Hein			17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from 10 April 1924 to 14 April 1924		
6 DATE OF BIRTH (month, day, and year) 26 Nov 1853			18 I last saw him alive on 10 April 1924		
7 AGE 72	Years 72	Months 4	Days 18	IF LESS THAN 1 day, hrs. or min.	
8 OCCUPATION OF DECEASED Lapp					

KIRCHENBOTE VOL. 42 #21 22 May 1924

Frau Jacob Hein, eine geb. Lapp, wurde geboren am 26. November 1853 in Grant, Michigan und starb am 14. April 1924 in Greeley, Colo., im Alter von 70 Jahren, vier Monaten und 18 Tagen. Vor zwei Monaten starb ihr Gatte und es ist nun kein Wunsch erfüllt: Ich ihm sein Bestes recht bald nachfolgen könnte. Die Verlebene war fünf Jahre lang krank und war zuletzt so hilflos, daß sie kein Stuhl mehr bewegen konnte und es war der Tod für sie ein Erlöser. Sie hinterläßt acht Kinder, vier Söhne und vier Töchter.

Greeley, Colo. X. B. Ament, Pastor.

c. 4. iv. Vital Records

C. Death Certificates

The most common question that I ask someone who contacts me for help with their research is "do you have the death certificates for the people you are researching?" Ideally, a death certificate is going to provide the person's birth date, birth location, maiden name for a woman, and parent's names. This information isn't always complete and accurate, but you should get the death certificates anyway just to see what they report. If your ancestors immigrated early, or were older when they immigrated, this could be the only item needed to connect your family into the 1857 Census of Volga Villages (more on why that is important later). For example, my great-grandparents were born in 1849 and 1853 respectively. Thus, they were both alive in 1857, and both are registered in the 1857 Russian Census for their villages. The death

certificates sometimes give only limited information, but in my case it was enough, in combination with their birth years, to identify exactly which family in the 1857 census that they each belonged to.

PARENTS	9 BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country)	Russia	Did Wa Wa Cau Acc tion 18 19
	10 NAME OF FATHER	John Thiel	
	11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (city or town) (State or country)	Russia	
	12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER	Christine Thiel	
	13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (city or town) (State or country)	Russia	
14 Informant (Address)	Catherine Hein Greely Colo		
15			

c. 4. iv. Vital Records

D. Marriage Licenses

If your ancestors got married here in the U.S., you should obtain copies of their marriage licenses. The information required to be reported on marriage licenses (and on license applications) varies depending on state and local requirements. Ideally, a marriage license (or the license application) will give the names of each spouse's parents and the age of each spouse. Some jurisdictions also require the birth location of each spouse and their current residence. The images below are from my grandmother's marriage license, and from my great-aunt's (my grandmother's younger sister) marriage license. This is a good example of why you should research your ancestor's siblings, in addition to researching your direct-line ancestors, and why you should gather multiple documents to prove each data point. On my great-aunt's license, she lists her mother as "Catherine Minch". On my grandmother's license, she lists her mother as "Mary Thiel". Which is correct? Their mother was Catharina Elisabeth Münch. She died shortly after my great-aunt was born, and their father married Anna Maria Thiel. I know this because I have church records and other data that provides these facts. If I had stopped when I found my grandmother's marriage license, and not looked for other records, I would have incorrectly identified her mother.

the rites and ceremonies of marriage between

Mr. Henry Hein AND

Miss Alie Engelman

The father's name of the said Henry Hein is Jacob Hein, and the maiden name of his mother was Katrin Lapp

and the father's name of the said Alie Engelman is Carl Engelmann, and the maiden name of her mother was Mary Thiel

The said Henry Hein resides in the County of Adams and State of Nebraska; is aged 20 years, was born in Russia and is a white person.

The said Alie Engelman resides in the county of Adams, and State of Nebraska; is aged 18 years, was born in Russia and is also a white person.

the rites and ceremonies of marriage between

Mr. Henry Hoff AND

Miss Mollie Engelman

The father's name of the said Henry Hoff is Conrad Hoff, and the maiden name of his mother was Marta Reiden

and the father's name of the said Mollie Engelman is Carl Engelmann, and the maiden name of her mother was Catharine Minch

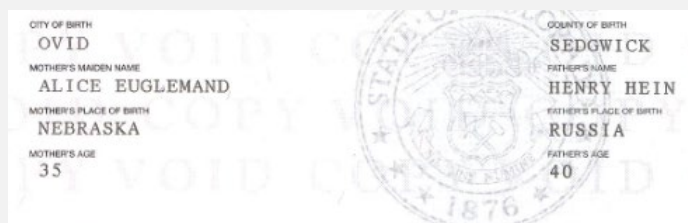
The said Henry Hoff resides in the County of Adams and State of Nebraska; is aged 23 years, was born in Russia and is a white person.

The said Mollie Engelman resides in the county of Adams, and State of Nebraska; is aged 18 years, was born in Russia and is also a white person.

c. 4. iv. Vital Records

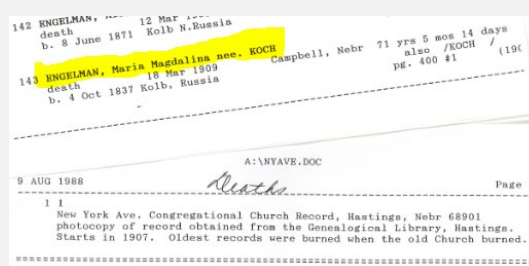
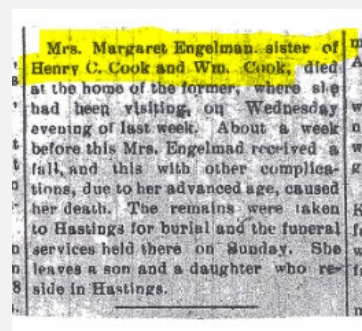
E. Birth Certificates

For privacy reasons, birth certificates are probably the most difficult record to obtain. You should be able to obtain the birth certificates for your direct ancestors (parents, grandparents) born here in the U.S. Like all other vital records, the items required to be reported on a birth certificate varies by jurisdiction and time period. I was looking through my records preparing to write this and discovered that I only had one birth certificate for a Volga German family member – my own father. Unfortunately, the certificate that the State of Colorado sent to me is a typed transcription of the certificate, not an image of the original. An image of an original is always preferable, if it is available. Perhaps the fact that is a transcript accounts for the error in spelling my grandmother's maiden name. I can't explain the error in my grandmother's birth location – surely she (or my grandfather, if he was the one who reported the data) knew that she was born in Russia, not Nebraska. This just turns out to be another example of why you should obtain multiple documents to prove each fact.



c. 4. v. Church records

I am going to spend quite a bit of time talking about church records when we get to research in Russia and Germany, but I don't want to completely ignore them while we are still talking about U.S. records. Church records will have data that will parallel what is reported in Vital Records: a baptism record for a birth, a wedding record for a marriage, and a funeral record for a death. It is possible that the church record may have more details than the corresponding Vital record. The problem is that you need to know what church your ancestor attended. That may be simple in a small town with only one or two churches for each denomination, more difficult in a larger town or city with many houses of worship. The name of the church that your ancestor attended might be mentioned in an obituary, on a funeral record, or in a newspaper announcement about a birth or marriage. Here is an example of a case where the church record contained much more data than the obituary or the death certificate. These records are for my gr-gr-grandmother, Maria Magdalena (Koch) Engelman. The death certificate was almost useless – it gave her age only. The obituary was interesting because it names her brothers who were living in the U.S., but it uses the Americanized "Cook" spelling. The church record, however, gives the correct spelling of her name, both maiden name and married name, and her date of birth.



c. 4. vi. Social Security Records

A. Social Security Number Applications

The information on a death certificate or an obituary is only as good as the knowledge of the person who submitted the information. That might be a family member who didn't know the names of the deceased's parents, or guessed at the spellings. I've seen numerous examples of death certificates with no parent's names, badly misspelled names, or information that was simply wrong. Because of the possibility that the information on the death certificate might be missing or incorrect, I suggest to people that, if their ancestor was living in the U.S. after the Social Security system was established, they should request a copy of their ancestor's Form SS-5. The SS-5 is the form that an individual would have filled out to apply for a Social Security Number (SSN). The individual would have filled out the SS-5 themselves, increasing the likelihood that the information would be accurate. The SS-5 form asked for the person's current name and address, birth name, birthdate, birth location, parent's names, race, employer name and address, and the date they filled out the application.

Judy Russell, who blogs as the "Legal Genealogist", has written an excellent article about the information reported on the SS-5 and how to obtain it. Rather than repeat what she has said, I am providing the link to her article. The quickest way to locate the person's SSN and proof of death (which you will need to request the SS-5) is to locate the person in the Social Security Death Index (SSDI). The SSDI can be searched at Family Search (free) or Ancestry.com (subscription).

<http://www.legalgenealogist.com/blog/2013/05/31/ordering-the-ss-5/>

Online request form: <https://www.ssa.gov/foia/request.html>

c. 4. vi. Social Security Records

B. Social Security Claims Index on Ancestry

Requesting a copy of your ancestor's SS-5 as described in the previous post is almost always worthwhile because of the information that it contains. There is another database that you can search that may provide some of the data on the SS-5 without needing to request the form. Ancestry.com has a database called "U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007". According to the database description on Ancestry.com, not everyone who is listed in the SSDI is in this database, but the database now includes more than 49 million people. Information reported in this database may include applicant's full name, SSN, date and place of birth, citizenship, sex, father's name, mother's maiden name, and race or ethnic description. In addition, name changes are reported. If your ancestor happens to be in this database, you might be able to skip ordering the actual Form SS-5. One useful aspect of this particular database is that it records any name changes that a person reported to Social Security. So, in the case of a woman, the database will report any name change that she reported as a result of marriage or divorce. I don't have any good examples of this on my Volga German side, so here is an example from another branch of my family. One image is the limited information reported in the Social Security Death Index, and the other is the much more robust data reported in the Applications and Claims Index (see next page).

<http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=60901>

Name:	Leitha M. Jean
SSN:	
Last Residence:	85304 Glendale, Maricopa, Arizona, USA
BORN:	21 Oct 1918
Died:	28 May 2001
State (Year) SSN issued:	Michigan (Before 1951)
<div>SAVE ▾</div>	

Name:	Leitha May Forcier [Leitha May Jean] [Leitha Trehey] [Leitha Jean]
SSN:	
Gender:	Female
Race:	White
Birth Date:	2 Oct 1918
Birth Place:	Detroit, Michigan [Highland Par??, Michigan]
Father Name:	Walter Forcier
Mother Name:	Ida Bird
Death Date:	28 May 2001
Type of Claim:	Original SSN.
Notes:	Dec 1936: Name listed as LEITHA MAY FORCIER; Sep 1953: Name listed as LEITHA MAY JEAN; Aug 1960: Name listed as LEITHA M TREHEY; 30 Mar 1984: Name listed as LEITHA MARY TREHEY; 14 Dec 1998: Name listed as LEITHA MAE JEAN; : Name listed as LEITHA JEAN

c. 4. vii. Military Draft Registration

Another source for your male ancestor's exact birth date, and sometimes birth location, is the World War I draft registrations. Our male immigrant family members registered for the WWI draft, even those who were not yet United States citizens, and some of them served in the military. The WWI registration cards can be searched in both Ancestry (subscription) and Family Search (free). Based on the cards that I have looked at, there appear to be two different versions of the WWI registration card. Both versions report the registrant's name, date of birth, current home address, citizenship status, and current employer. One version asked for the nearest relative, and the other version asked for the name of the town where the registrant was born. Here is the link to the collection on Family Search and examples of both formats: <https://familysearch.org/search/collection/1968530?collectionNameFilter=true>

REGISTRATION CARD	
SERIAL NUMBER 1	John Hein
2	Windsor Weld Colo
3	43
4	December 11 th 1877
RACE White	
U. S. CITIZEN Native Born	
PRESENCE Farm Laborer	
EMPLOYER'S NAME John Winderpo	
PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS Windsor Weld Colo	
NEAREST RELATIVE Natie Hein	
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE	
J. M. G. O. Form No. 1 (Rev)	

REGISTRATION CARD	
1	George Sitzman Jr
2	Route 5 Greeley Colo
3	January 23 rd 1891
4	Alien
5	Frank Russia
6	Russia
7	Farmer
8	Route 5 Greeley Colo
9	no
10	Married Race (specify which) Caucasian
11	no
12	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.	
George Sitzman Jr	

c. 4. viii. Citizenship and Naturalization

A. Naturalization Records

1. United States

Many of our ancestors who immigrated to North America applied for citizenship and became naturalized citizens of the country in which they settled. Depending on the time frame during which their citizenship papers were processed, those files might contain a wealth of genealogical information. In the United States, the Naturalization Act of 1906 dramatically changed the process of becoming naturalized and the information reported on the forms. Prior to 1906, an immigrant could have had their naturalization processed by a federal, state, or local court, and the information reported on the forms was quite basic. After 1906, the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (now the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services or USCIS), took over the naturalization process. After 1906 there was considerably more detail required to be reported on the forms. Family Search has a nice summary of the naturalization process at different points in U.S. history, and links to searchable indexes here:

https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/United_States_Naturalization_and_Citizenship

Here are examples of a pre-1906 naturalization record and a post-1906 naturalization record:

Date of birth December 11, 1862 Place of landing New York
Date of landing February 1891 Business or Occupation Builder

To the Honorable the Judge of the District Court of the United States,
In and for the Western District of Pennsylvania.

The Petitioner of Peter James Reinert
respectfully sheweth, that your petitioner is an alien, a native of Germany
and has resided in the United States for five years, and three years next preceding his arrival at the age of
twenty-one years, and has continued to reside therein to the time of his making this application, and that he
has resided in the State of Pennsylvania one year previous to making this application; that he is now
twenty-one years of age, and upwards. He therefore prays your Honor to admit him to become a citizen of
the United States agreeably to the Act of Congress, in such case made and provided.

Peter James Reinert the petitioner above named,
do swear that the facts set forth in this petition are true; that for upwards of two years it has
been his intention to become a citizen of the United States; that I will support the Consti-
tution of the United States, and that I do absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance
and fidelity to every foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly to the
Emperor of Germany
of whom I was heretofore a subject.

Sworn and subscribed in open Court, } Peter James Reinert
this 9 day of January A. D. 1899 } Bradbrook C.D.
M. J. Brindley Clerk

Louis J. Reinert do swear that the petitioner
above named has resided within the limits and under the jurisdiction of the United States of America
five years at least, and within the State of Pennsylvania one year at least; that he now resides in
North Braddock
Pennsylvania; that he is a man of good moral character, attached to the principles of the Constitution of the
United States, and well disposed to the good order and happiness of the same; and that to the best of
deponent's knowledge and belief, it has been for two years next preceding this application the bona fide
intention of the petitioner to become a citizen of the United States.

Sworn and subscribed in open Court, } Louis J. Reinert
this 9 day of January A. D. 1899 }
M. J. Brindley Clerk

Western District of Pennsylvania, ss.
And now, January 9 1899, the said petitioner,
Peter James Reinert being duly qualified, is hereby admitted a
CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES.
Wm. J. Brindley

TRIPPLICATE (To be given to declarant)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DECLARATION OF INTENTION
(Invalid for all purposes seven years after the date hereof)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA In the SUPERIOR Court
COUNTY OF FRESNO of CALIFORNIA FRESNO, CALIF.

I, Mrs. Anna Maria Engelmann
residing at 2221 Kirk Street Fresno California
occupation housewife age 70 years, do declare on oath that my personal description is:
sex female color white complexion fair color of eyes blue
hair brown height 5 feet 2 inches; weight 130 pounds; visible scars or marks
None nationality Russian
I was born in Peckayvka Russia June 25, 1868
I am not married. The name of my wife or husband is _____
I was married on _____ at _____
I have been in the United States _____ years.

Sworn and subscribed in open Court, at _____
this _____ day of _____ A. D. 1906
_____ Clerk

Subscribed and sworn to before me in the form of oath shown above in the
office of the Clerk of said Court, at _____ Fresno, California
this _____ day of _____ October _____
_____ Deputy Clerk

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE
File No. 22 X 16386

c. 4. viii. Citizenship and Naturalization

A. Naturalization Records

2. Canada

All of my Canadian ancestors were French Canadian, so I have to admit that I don't have much personal experience researching Volga Germans in Canada. The Library and Archives of Canada has a searchable database of naturalization records for 1915-1951. There is an article on Family Search that summarizes the history of Naturalization in Canada and has links to additional information.

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/citizenship-naturalization-records/naturalized-records-1915-1951/pages/introduction.aspx>

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Canada_Naturalization_and_Citizenship

c. 4. viii. Citizenship and Naturalization

B. Alien Registration

1. United States

What about our ancestors who never became citizens of the U.S. or Canada? In the U.S., the Alien Registration Act of 1940 (also known as the Smith Act) required aliens aged 14 and older living in or entering the United States to register and be fingerprinted. If your immigrant ancestors never became naturalized citizens, and they were alive during World War II, they would have been required to register as Aliens. The files resulting from this registration process are called Alien Files or "A-Files".

In order to determine if an A-File exists for your family member, you can search the "United States, Index to Alien Case Files, 1940-2003" on either Ancestry.com (paid subscription) or FamilySearch.com (free). The searchable catalog on the National Archives web site also includes the index of the A-Files. <http://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/>

If the individual was born more than 100 years ago, the files have been transferred to the National Archives in Kansas City. You must make your request by e-mail, postal mail, or fax in order to get the documents – there is no online ordering system for the A-files at Kansas City. Within a few weeks, you will receive either an e-mail or a letter informing you of the number of pages in the file and providing you with the total cost to send you the copies. The minimum charge is \$20. <http://www.archives.gov/research/immigration/aliens/a-files-kansas-city.html>

A-Files not held at Kansas City must be requested via the Genealogy Service of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). Along with the A-Files not yet transferred to Kansas City, USCIS has other documents related to immigration and naturalization such as Visa Files, Registry Files, and Naturalization Certificate Files. <http://www.uscis.gov/genealogy>

What is included in an A-file? The Alien Registration Form (AR-2) asked for name and aliases, residence address, date and place of birth, country of citizenship, marital status, physical description, date of arrival in the U.S. and the port and name of the vessel, occupation, employer, U.S. naturalization status, memberships in clubs, organizations or societies, military service, arrest record, and political activities. Depending on how much interaction your family member had with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) the file might also contain valuable records such as visas, petitions and affidavits, correspondence, photographs, and vital records.

Form AR-2
OFFICE USE

2711370

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE

ALIEN REGISTRATION FORM

1. (a) My name is Henry Hein (b) I entered the United States under the name of Henry Hein

2. (a) I have also been known by the following names (include maiden name if a married woman, professional names, nicknames, and aliases): Henry Hein

3. (a) I live at Route 1 Julesburg Weld Colorado (b) My post-office address is Julesburg Weld Colorado

4. (a) I was born on August 18 1880 (b) I was born in (or near) Frank Russia

5. (a) I am a citizen or subject of Russia (b) My marital status is (check one):
Single ☐ Married ☒ Widowed ☐ Divorced ☐

6. I am 5 feet, 6 inches in height, weigh 160 pounds, have Gray hair and Blue eyes.

7. (a) I last arrived in the United States at New York, New York on June 1908

8. (a) I came as a (check one): Passenger ☒ Crew member ☐ Seaman ☐ Other ☐
(b) I entered the United States as a (check one): Permanent resident ☒ Visitor ☐ Student ☐ Treaty merchant ☐ Seaman ☐ Official of a foreign government ☐ Employee of a foreign government official ☐ Other ☐

9. (a) I first arrived in the United States on June 1908 (b) I have lived in the United States a total of 30 years.

10. (a) I expect to remain in the United States Permanently (b) My present occupation is Farmer

11. (a) My usual occupation is Farmer (b) My present occupation is Farmer

12. (a) My employer (or proprietor, parent or guardian) is Self (b) My address is Julesburg Weld Colorado

13. (a) My employer (or proprietor, parent or guardian) is Self (b) My address is Julesburg Weld Colorado

14. (a) My employer (or proprietor, parent or guardian) is Self (b) My address is Julesburg Weld Colorado

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100. (a) My employer (or proprietor, parent or guardian) is Self (b) My address is Julesburg Weld Colorado

10. I am, or have been within the past 5 years, or intend to be engaged in the following activities:
In addition to other information, list memberships or activities in clubs, organizations, or societies None

11. My military or naval service has been None

12. (a) I have Not applied for first citizenship papers in the United States. Date of application Unknown, 1910
First citizenship papers received 1910 Date Seattle, Wash.
Filed petition for naturalization DATE DATE DATE

13. (a) I have the following specified relatives living in the United States:
Parent(s) None Husband or wife Yes Children 5
Grandparent(s) None Grandchild(ren) None

14. I Have Not been arrested or indicted for, or convicted of any offense (or offenses). These offenses are:
Nature of offense None Date of arrest None Place of arrest None Disposition of case None

15. Within the past 5 years I Have Not been affiliated with or active in (a member of, official of, a worker for) organizations, devoted in whole or in part to influencing or furthering the political activities, public relations, or public policy of a foreign government. None

AFFIDAVIT FOR PERSONS 14 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER

I have read or have had read to me the above statements, and do hereby swear (or affirm) that these statements are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me at the place and on the date here designated by the official post-office stamp at the right.

AFFIDAVIT FOR PARENT OR GUARDIAN ONLY

I am the Parent of the above named alien, who is Henry Hein (check in terms of "ALL THE ABOVE") and have made the above allegations for him (or her). I have read or have had the same read to me, and do hereby swear (or affirm) that they are true and complete to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief.

Subscribed and sworn to (or affirmed) before me at the place and on the date here designated by the official post-office stamp at the right.

SEP 1940

c. 4. viii. Citizenship and Naturalization

B. Alien Registration

2. Canada

For those living in Canada, an Alien registration system similar to the system in the United States was in effect during World War II. According to the Library and Archives of Canada web site, registration was required of all persons 16 years of age or older, between 1940 and 1946. The registration questionnaire included address, age, date and place of birth, general health, and occupation. For immigrants, the year of arrival in Canada and their parents' country of birth are included. If your ancestor has been dead for more than 20 years, you can place a request with Statistics Canada to search this database, called the "National Registration File of 1940". The charge to search for a record (at the time I wrote this) is \$45 and the request can be made via Statistics Canada's web site.

<http://www5.statcan.gc.ca/olc-cel/olc.action?ObjId=93C0006&ObjType=22&lang=en&limit=0>

c. 4. ix. Immigration

A. When did immigration to the Americas begin and end?

Generally, immigration from Russia to North and South American began in the mid-1870s.

Groups of scouts began travelling to the U.S. in 1874 to investigate the situation here. If your ancestors came from a Volga German village, you will generally be looking for ship manifests in 1875 and later. For the most part, the Russian Revolution in 1917 ended immigration from Russia. There were some people who were able to escape during the famine of the 1920s, but effectively that was the end of emigration out of Russia.

<http://cvgs.cu-portland.edu/immigration/UnitedStates.cfm>

c. 4. ix. Immigration

B. No, your ancestor's name was not changed at Ellis Island

This is a common, and false story that is often repeated, and almost never true. The ship manifests were filled out in Europe, at the port of departure. No one at Ellis Island (or any other arrival port) was writing down names, thus there was no possibility of an immigration officer writing down a name incorrectly. You can read more about this here:

<https://www.nypl.org/blog/2013/07/02/name-changes-ellis-island>

c. 4. ix. Immigration

C. Find the ship manifest

What information is in the ship manifest? The level of detail on ship manifests varied over time. Manifests from the early years of immigration to the U.S. list name, age, sex, occupation, country of origin, and destination. For example, here is the 1890 arrival of my great-grandfather, Carl Engelman, his second wife, and my grandmother and her sister.

NAME	AGE Years Months	SEX	CALLING	The country of which they are citizens	Intended destination or location	DATE DATE OF DEPARTURE	Location of embarkment or origin	Number of pieces of baggage	Transit or in transit, or attending particular agents
Susanus Kappeler	60	f	over	✓	Russia		Maryland	✓	✓
Stephan Kappeler	24	m	laborer	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Anna Kappeler	27	f	wife	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Heinrich Kappeler	22	m	laborer	✓	"		"	✓	✓
James Kappeler	18	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Martha Kappeler	23	f	wife	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Max Kappeler	21	m	laborer	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Alma Kappeler	27	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Heinrich Kappeler	29	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Stephan Kappeler	11	f	child	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Carl Kappeler	20	m	wife	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Anna Kappeler	18	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Heinrich Kappeler	28	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Carl Kappeler	23	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Martha Kappeler	26	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Carl Engelman	26	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Anna Engelman	29	f	wife	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Elise Engelman	9	f	child	✓	"		"	✓	✓
Anna Engelman	21	"	"	✓	"		"	✓	✓

Manifests for later years become much more detailed, with the information covering two pages. Here is an example of a manifest from 1907. The gives the exact town from which the immigrant departed, their place of birth, and the name of the family or friend that they were going to join in the U.S.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE U. S. IMMIGRATION OFFICER AT PORT OF ARRIVAL.

Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved March 3, 1903, to be delivered to the U. S. Immigration Officer by the Commanding Officer of any vessel having such passengers on board upon arrival at a port in the United States.

S. S. Steamer "Hermann" sailing from Bremen, dated 1907, arriving at Port of New York, 1907.

No. on list	NAME IN FULL	Age	Sex	Calling	Religion	Place of Birth	Last Permanent Residence	First Destination	By whom	Whether ever before in the United States and if so, when and where?	Whether going to join a relative or friend, and if so, name and complete address	Condition of Health	Deficient or Exposed	Marked or Mutilated	Height	Weight	Complexion	Eyes	Color of Hair	Color of Skin	Place of Birth	Place of Birth
1	Josephine Schmitt	45	F	Domestic	Catholic	Germany	Germany	Germany	Self	No	No	Good	None	None	5' 8"	120	Fair	Blue	Brown	Blue	Germany	Germany
2	Josephine Schmitt	15	F	Domestic	Catholic	Germany	Germany	Germany	Self	No	No	Good	None	None	5' 8"	120	Fair	Blue	Brown	Blue	Germany	Germany
3	Walter Schmitt	45	M	Domestic	Catholic	Germany	Germany	Germany	Self	No	No	Good	None	None	5' 8"	120	Fair	Blue	Brown	Blue	Germany	Germany
4	Anna Schmitt	45	F	Domestic	Catholic	Germany	Germany	Germany	Self	No	No	Good	None	None	5' 8"	120	Fair	Blue	Brown	Blue	Germany	Germany
5	George Schmitt	15	M	Domestic	Catholic	Germany	Germany	Germany	Self	No	No	Good	None	None	5' 8"	120	Fair	Blue	Brown	Blue	Germany	Germany
6	Robert Schmitt	15	M	Domestic	Catholic	Germany	Germany	Germany	Self	No	No	Good	None	None	5' 8"	120	Fair	Blue	Brown	Blue	Germany	Germany

c. 4. ix. Immigration

C. Sources and Search Engines to locate ship manifests:

1. Steve Morse One-Step Web Pages

This is a fantastic web site with all sorts of tools in addition to the ship manifest search forms. If you don't know exactly when your ancestors arrived, or where they arrived, you've got a variety of search forms to experiment with here. Try each one of them. If there is a dollar sign next to a form, that means that the form will take you to Ancestry, and you will need an Ancestry subscription to access the information. You will need a user name and password to access the Ellis Island database, but there is no cost to sign up for an account on the Ellis Island web site.

<http://stevemorse.org/>

2. Castle Garden

Castle Garden was in operation from 1820 until 1891. If your ancestors arrived in 1891 or earlier, they might have arrived here. Castle Garden has a searchable web site. The Castle Garden web site will provide you with a transcription of the data on the manifest, but not an image of the manifest itself. If you find a record that you are interested in, you can look at the original images in Family Search (under "New York Passenger Lists 1820-1891"), or on Ancestry.

<http://www.castlegarden.org/>

3. Ellis Island

Ellis Island began processing immigrants in 1892. Ellis Island has a searchable web site, which, similar to Castle Garden, will give you data extracted from the ship manifest. Ellis Island will also offer to sell you a copy of the manifest page. Similar to Castle Garden, you can look at the image of the manifest on Family Search or on Ancestry.

<https://www.libertyellisfoundation.org/>

4. Other Ports of Arrival

Don't assume that your ancestors arrived in New York. There are many other ports that your ancestors could have used to enter the U.S. – Baltimore, Boston, Galveston, New Orleans, or Philadelphia are all possibilities. Here is another web site that provides lists and links for passenger lists,

<https://www.germanroots.com/passengers.html>

5. Arrival in Canada

Many Volga Germans settled in Canada. The Library and Archives Canada web site has searchable databases that you might find useful for genealogy research. On the main immigration records page, you will see that there is a database specifically for Immigration from the Russian Empire, in addition to the many other databases. There are also Canadian Passenger Lists on both Ancestry and Family Search.

<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/immigration-records/pages/introduction.aspx>

6. Arrival in Canada, with later crossing to the U.S.

It wasn't unusual for our Volga German ancestors to arrive in Canada first, and cross the border into the U.S. later. The lists of these border crossings have long been called the "St. Albans Lists", after the Vermont border crossing of the same name. The databases of these crossings on both Family Search and Ancestry contain much more than just the crossings at that particular place in Vermont.

<http://genealogyalacarte.ca/?p=9845>

c. 5. Sources for documents

i. a. Family Search: Indexed Records

We are approaching the end of Part 1, so I want to wrap this up by going over sources for some of the documents that I have discussed in the previous posts. I have probably mentioned Family Search more frequently than any other source, and I have posted links to several of their online digitized and indexed databases. Family Search is free, and there is a huge amount of data there. You do not want to limit yourself only to documents that have been indexed there, but it is an excellent place to start. In order to search the records that have been indexed, go to the Family Search web site. Click on "Search" and then click on "Records". In the "Search Historical Records" screen, you can fill in whatever information you have about the person you are researching – name, birth and death dates and locations, names of family members, etc. You might want to start with a

The screenshot shows the 'Search Historical Records' page on FamilySearch.org. It features a search bar for the 'DECEASED ANCESTOR'S NAME' with fields for 'First Names' and 'Last Names'. Below this are three main search categories: 'SEARCH WITH A LIFE EVENT' (with links for Birth, Marriage, Residence, Death, and Any), 'SEARCH WITH A RELATIONSHIP' (with links for Spouse, Parents, and Other Person), and 'RESTRICT RECORDS BY' (with links for Location, Type, Batch Number, and Film Number). There are also input fields for 'Birthplace', 'Birth Year (Range)' (From and To), 'Country', and 'State or Province'. A checkbox for 'Match all terms exactly' is present, along with 'Search' and 'Reset' buttons.

very broad search – just put in a name at first. If that gives you too many results that are not relevant, narrow the search by putting in more details such as dates and locations.

c. 5. Sources for documents

i. b. Family Search: Microfilms that are not indexed

If you have searched the indexed records on the Family Search web site, and you did not find any records for your ancestor, does that mean that there are no records about your ancestor in the Family Search collection? No. It just means that there are not in the records that have been indexed. The Family History Library has a vast collection of microfilmed records, and many of those have yet to be indexed. Since the time that I first started writing this guide, there has been a change in the Family Search policy regarding microfilms. As of Fall 2017, you can no longer rent microfilms and have them sent to your local Family History Centers. When Family Search announced this change, they stated that they planned to digitize the microfilm collection in order to make the images available online, and the target date for completion of that project is 2020. There are many microfilms that already have been digitized, and many more that still need to be digitized.

How do you figure out if records that you are interested in have been digitized but not indexed? Let's say that you are researching an ancestor who you think was naturalized in Kansas, and need to figure out if Family Search has any records of Kansas Naturalizations. To do that, on the main Family Search page, choose "Search", and then from that menu, choose "Catalog". It defaults to searching by place name, so I would type "Kansas" in the box. That brings up a list of items that are available for Kansas. I page down until I see "Naturalization and Citizenship, and I click on that. That will open up a list of the items available in that category. If I choose one of those lines and click on it, I can see all of the microfilms available .

When you are looking at the list of microfilms, you will see symbols in the

The screenshot shows the FamilySearch Catalog interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: RECORDS, GENEALOGIES, CATALOG (selected), BOOKS, and WIKI. Below the tabs, the page title is "FamilySearch Catalog". A description states: "Search the catalog of genealogical materials (including books, online materials, microfilm, microfiche, and publications) made available by FamilySearch. Many items can be loaned to local family history centers around the world." A link "Learn more about the catalog and how to access materials." is provided. The "SEARCH BY:" section has tabs for Place, Surnames, Titles, Author, Subjects, and Keywords. The "Place" tab is selected, and a search box contains "Kansas". A dropdown menu shows suggestions: "Kansas", "United States, Kansas", "United States, Kansas, Kansas", "United States, Illinois, Edgar, Kansas", and "United States, Ohio, Seneca, Kansas". The "United States, Kansas" option is highlighted. Below the search results, there is a list of items under the heading "United States, Kansas - Naturalization and citizenship (8)". The items are listed with their titles, authors, and an "Add" button. The items are: "Declarations of intention, 1908-1942; naturalizations, 1865-1984" (Author: United States. District Court (Kansas : First Division)), "Declarations of intention, 1909-1947; naturalizations, 1909-1979" (Author: United States. District Court (Kansas : Second Division)), "Declarations of intention, 1915-1964; naturalizations, 1916-1966" (Author: United States. District Court (Kansas : Third Division)), "Federal naturalizations for the 1st district of Kansas : northeast (1856-1902)" (Author: Kusek, Joan; United States. District Court (Kansas : First Division)), "Index to naturalizations, 1856-1897; declaration of intention 1862-1897" (Author: United States. District Court (Kansas)), "Military petitions for naturalization, 1918-1921" (Author: Kansas. District Court (Geary County)), "Records of the U.S. Attorneys and Marshals : alien application for permit, 1917-1918" (Author: United States. District Court (Kansas)), and "Registration affidavits of aliens, 1918" (Author: United States. District Court (Kansas)). At the bottom, there are links to "United States, Kansas - Naturalization and citizenship - Indexes (2)", "United States, Kansas - Newspapers (5)", and "United States, Kansas - Newspapers - Bibliography (1)".

right-hand column. In this example, there are camera symbols, and a camera with a key over it. The camera symbol means that the images have been digitized, and you can look at them online from your home computer. The camera with a key over it means that there is some kind of restriction on viewing the digital images. You can click on it to see what the restriction is. Sometimes the item must be viewed at a Family History Center or Affiliate Library, and sometimes the item can only be viewed with an LDS member login. Another symbol to look out for (not shown here) is the magnifying glass. That means that the records have been indexed.

Film/Digital Notes (This family history center has 13 of 13 films/fiche.)					
Note	Location	Collection/Shelf	Film	DGS	Format
TOPEKA Declarations of intention no. 1-300 1908-1919	Family History Library	United States & Canada Film	1711040 Items 3-5	7797924	
Declarations of intention no. 201-649 1915-1942	Family History Library	United States & Canada Film	1711262 Items 1-3	7796818	
Naturalization petitions no. 1-50 1908-1915	Family History Library	United States & Canada Film	1711262 Item 4	7796818	
Naturalization petitions no. 51-113 1915-1921	Family History Library	United States & Canada Film	1711262 Item 7	7796818	
Naturalization petitions no. 114-600 1928-1947	Family History Library	United States & Canada Film	1711263	7796817	

c. 5. Sources for documents

ii. Local History and Genealogy Societies

Local Historical Societies and Genealogical Societies are a fantastic and frequently overlooked resource. If there is a Historical Society in the area where your ancestor lived, you need to get in touch with them and find out what they've got. For example, one branch of my Volga German Family lived in Hastings, Nebraska, which is in Adams County. The Adams County Nebraska Historical Society sent me copies of my grandparents' marriage license and the church record transcription of my gr-gr-grandmother's burial records. The Morgan Museum (Ft. Morgan Colorado) sent me my grandparents' obituaries and a map of where their burial plots are in the cemetery. On my French Canadian side, some of my ancestors lived in Bay City Michigan. Someone from the Bay County Michigan Genealogy Society sent me copies of my family's obituaries and photos of their headstones from the local cemetery. Typically, a local History or Genealogy Society will have things like obituary indexes, local directories, and cemetery indexes, but they might have much more than that. You never know what a particular Society might have until you ask. Just Google the name of the county (or city) where your ancestor lived, along with the words "genealogy society" or "historical society" and see what comes up.

c. 5. Sources for documents

iii. Libraries

I love libraries. If your local public library subscribes to the Library edition of Ancestry, that's a great way to get free access to that database. Some public libraries have separate genealogy departments, and subscribe to many different genealogy databases. Some libraries are Family History Library Affiliates, which allows you to view Family Search digital images that might be restricted to viewing at a Family History Center. The library in the location where your ancestors lived might have specific resources for that geographic area, such as newspaper indexes, local directories, and census records for the area. They might even have seminars about how to get started doing genealogy, or they might host the meetings of the local history or genealogy society. In addition to public

libraries, there are libraries that specialize in materials related to Volga Germans and Germans from Russia. The Center for Volga German Studies in Portland, Oregon, and the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, in Lincoln, Nebraska, both collect materials that would be of interest to you if you are researching Volga Germans.



c. 5. Sources for documents

iv. Ancestry.com

Love Ancestry.com or Hate Ancestry.com? Sometimes it is both at the same time. It is a fantastic resource, and I use my Ancestry account constantly. So why do some people (like me) sometimes hate Ancestry.com? Two main problems: First, the record "Hints" sometimes have nothing at all to do with your ancestor. I can't tell you how many times Ancestry has given me a "hint" to a record that clearly is an entirely different person than the one I am researching. Second, it is common for user submitted trees to contain completely incorrect information. The biggest mistake that people make when starting out in genealogy research is to assume that the information that other people put in their online trees is accurate, checked, and supported with research. If this was true, Ancestry (and MyHeritage and FamilySearch) would solve all of your genealogy research problems instantly. The fact is that you have to very carefully examine any information that you find in other people's trees and verify everything. That said, Ancestry has an excellent collection of documents, and is one of the best sources available for genealogy research.

End of Part 1.