

# G-SIG FORUM #76

from the German Special Interest Group. **G-SIG** is an effort of the St. Louis Genealogical Society ( [www.stlgs.org](http://www.stlgs.org) ) and the German American Heritage Society, St. Louis, Mo. ( [www.gahs-stlouis.org](http://www.gahs-stlouis.org) ). This forum is for genealogical, educational, and historical information with fresh insights plus ideas on German traditions and ancestry. Gerald Perschbacher is *FORUM* compiler and coordinator.

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## Finding Leads and Making Contacts

*By Gerald Perschbacher*

It takes a little effort, some persistence, and an occasional smile from heaven for researchers to strike a golden vein of information that will advance their historical and genealogical cause. That's what happened when I stumbled onto:

[Rheinland-Pfälzische Bibliographie : Pfarrer. Geistlicher](#)

And on top of it all, there is a translation option: [Translate this page.](#)

*Here is a translated sample to promote the site:*

**Nagel, Christian.** - 20 years as a priest in Mainz-Weisenau (1991-2011), pastor Christian Nagel. - In: Weisenau Parish / Catholic Assumption Parish Mainz-Weisenau. [Ed: Gebhard short ... ]. - Mainz-Weisenau, 2011. - ISBN 978-3-00036093-0. - Pp. 222-225. - 2011. - 2011. - Illustrated. - 978-3-00036093-0. -

**TREATED TYPE: Weisenau. - Weisenau. -**

**OBJECTIVE CLASSIFICATION: pastor. Clergyman. - Parish. - Nagel, Christian; biography. - [Details ...](#)**

This site offers background nuggets of information. Those facts circle around Protestant and Catholic pastors, their careers, and the congregations they served. A map of the area can be opened. Short biographical points about the pastor are listed. Birth and death years are shown. What I find intriguing are the connections to written resources (especially books) on the pastors and their careers. You might even pursue other links that may establish an "in" with a researcher. I did not go to the nth degree in my search at this point, but I suspect you may even be able to make contact with officials who have custody of church records!

I conclude that since this magnificent resource site exists for the Rhein-Pfalz area, similar sites may likely exist for other areas of Germany. I leave it to you to do your own search for those. If you succeed, send a note; we'll share the news!

## Presidential Connections!

Tom Schwarztrauber ([itshockey@gmail.com](mailto:itshockey@gmail.com)) was greatly surprised when he was mentioned briefly in **G-SIG FORUM #75**. The note said that Tom "has made major discoveries in his ancestry. You may be fascinated to know what those are. Drop Tom a line and ask. Maybe he'll share some tips!"

The result: one of our G-SIGers did just that! The response read:

*Dear Tom,*

*I have not done any research on this surname. However I have a copy of my grandmother's (Anna Maria STEFFENAUER) original Christening certificate. Her Godmother was Anna Maria SCHWARZTRAUBE (no 'r' at end) the wife of Nicholas FERKEL. This was April 1881 in Columbia, Ill., at St. Paul's Evang. Probably no connection but you might find interesting, if so you can add to your trivia trove. -- Happy hunting.*

Tom didn't waste any time responding. "I found this lady's telephone number, called, and we had a nice conversation about exactly who Anna Maria Schwarztrauber (with the ending "r") really was from the *Schwarztrauber, Stewart and Related Families* book of my cousin Sayre Archie Schwarztrauber.

Then Tom went on with an update on his Presidential connections. "Just to let you know... I added to the Family Tree another Five U.S. Presidents: Taft, Fillmore, Coolidge, Teddy Roosevelt and FDR."

Some people may consider it is unreal to make a genealogical connection to a President, but think about it. If your family has been in America for a long time, and if some ancestors moved in or near social circles that overlapped with Presidents and their extended family, then a link might be made. Tom's thinking is ranging wide and glorious right now, and you may wish to contact him for more details. Here is an example: [Adams, President John II](#)

Go to:

<http://trees.ancestry.com/pt/RequestTreeAccess.aspx?tid=87298&pid=6007556576>

You will find the high number of people who are connected to the former President. Tom has accumulated some impressive and heady information! But it didn't stop there.

Tom added, "My cousin Don and I are just about to pass the 22,000th person in the Family Tree -- kings, queens, earls, lords, ladies, emperor, empresses, admirals, generals, commodores, dukes, duchesses, and many of us common folk." Then he made one more admission: "CHARLEMAGNE, Holy Roman Emperor (also known as Charles I in the regnal lists of Germany, the Holy Roman Empire, and France).

Fanciful? Not really. Read on....

## Details About Regal Ancestry

Let's focus on Tom's connection to Charlemagne (Karl der Grosse or Karl (Charles) the Great, as Germans refer to him—the name Charlemagne is of French derivation). His power was at its peak around 800A.D. I shall reference him in this response as KdG. He was the man who took the Kingdom of the Franks and made it into a true empire.

The Franks were one of the major German tribes, with its strength along the East Bank of the Rhein River...from the Main River northward (basically Hessen land, the Hessians (Hessen) being a ). Around the year 500 A.D., Clovis was king (he also went by the name Chlodwig and, in French, Louis). He was the first king of the Franks, so to say, since he united the Salian Franks who lived around the mouth of the Rhein and merged them with the Ripuarian Franks who lived to the south centered around what is now Mainz, Wiesbaden, Frankfurt, Hessen Darmstadt, and points nearby but on the east side of the Rhein.

The Salian Franks were known as the “salt-water” group while the other (mainly Hessen sub tribes) were “fresh-water” Franks. Those Ripuarian Franks believed they were the true Franks (Free Men) since they never bowed to Rome. On the other hand, the Salians had contracted with Rome to live on the west side of the Rhein, along with the east side. Regardless, Clovis merged the groups and went on a war streak thereafter, subjugating other Germanic tribes, remaining Celts, and old Romans.

When KdG was at his peak of power 300 years later, he advanced the art of war and for more than 30 years extended the empire. He was crowned “Holy Roman Emperor” by the then-Pope.

I told Tom that, with all this history, legends abounded. As noble families became royal bloodlines, KdG's family married for the cause of treaties, wealth, power, and political convenience. This extended KdG's gene pool. But something else happened. Families that had little evidence to connect their lineage to KdG soon had batteries of researchers and officials find all sorts of verifications on family ties to the KdG. It added to their prestige. It made them stand proudly among other royal families. It seemed the trendy thing to do. In a good number of cases, those connections truly existed. In other cases, well...some scholars would be prone to say that “the jury is still out.” No definitive determination exists. And it probably never will, given the centuries that have passed and the scant information that remains.

Books have been written about the descendants of KdG. There is little purpose in disagreeing with any of the information. It is romantic to believe it happened that way, and part of our study of lineage leans to the dramatic and the

romantic. That's OK. But equally so, we reach a point where it can be said, "We simply don't know for sure; we are going with the flow."

Wouldn't it be fun to do a DNA test on EVERYONE of European ancestry and see how they are related? Even then, the best that might be said is that "so-and-so shares some of the same genes as KdG," since KdG's genes were derived from even older stock. Again, a romantic thing to consider.

## Now to the Civil War!

Tom added another point similar to genealogical researchers who swing along the branches of their ancestry and those of their spouse. "I've started on my wife's DANNER family -- made connections to her 2nd cousin, Tom Danner, and she met him for the first time on March 16th, 2012. One of the missing pieces of information was HOW their **2nd Great Grandfather died** (2nd Lt. George Philip Danner, born June 3, 1819, in Godramstein, Landau, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany." Death came to the soldier on the 30th of July in 1861, while marching from St. Louis, Mo., to Bird's Point, Mo. (Tom said that spot was about 155 miles below St. Louis and directly across the Mississippi River from Cairo, Ill. Some people concluded that his wife's ancestor "died from enemy fire, as officers were targeted by the opposing forces. Tom thought that he had a stroke and died. Officer Danner was in Company H, 1st US Reserve Infantry Regiment, Missouri, and served under the command of Major General John C. Fremont. Then the world grew a little smaller for Tom when he realized that Fremont "was one of my cousins -- my 8th cousin 4times removed...."

I'll reveal some of the observations. "Tom...turns out that your family and mine evidently crossed paths in history. Fritz G. Perschbacher signed up in April 1861 under Sigel in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mo.; he was involved in the Camp Jackson Affair that stabilized St. Louis; was at Carthage and Wilson's Creek which stifled the southern advance (and southern sympathies) in the summer of 1861.

"Then he and more than 30 fellow soldiers came back to St. Louis (after the more-than-three-month enlistment, which they stretched due to the need of battle). Those men signed on with the 43<sup>rd</sup> Illinois (which WAS to be Sigel's new unit but was wrenched away from him due to military politics). It became the Koerner Regiment. Another Fritz G. Perschbacher joined that regiment (in the same Co. G as his cousin, the other Fritz) and saw service under Grant and alongside Sherman to Shiloh, Vicksburg, and other related points.

"Your ancestor was shot and died while in Missouri. While there were major clashes in the early months of the war in Missouri, the biggest danger was the ongoing 'bushwhacker' harassment that brought down an occasional soldier or two now and then when the army least expected. It was unnerving and dangerous. Those shooters would blend into the countryside they knew very well since they lived there. To many of them, the war had little (if anything) to do with the support of slavery.... For those snipers, it wasn't even 'states rights' but a simple matter of 'get off my land.' So your ancestor may have been one of their targets....

"Your e-mail brought several more points to mind. It was said that Germans left the South to fight for the Union. No doubt some did. But the South did not have a huge number of German immigrants. Those were centered in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Other groups settled here and there, in other states, but not with the density of the states mentioned.

"Germans were not ALL against slavery. If anything, most were hoping to escape the threat of a European-type war that conscripted countless soldiers to replenish fallen men who would have been the future of the land....

"Indeed, in Missouri, at least a third of the men entered the Civil War cause for the Union. As you said, a high number were for a three-month hitch. One of my ancestors, Adam Perschbacher, was among them. A resident of St. Clair County, Ill., he made his way to New Melle in St. Charles County, Mo., and signed on with Krekel's Dutch, as they were called. Krekel was a high-power politician of wealth and stamina. Adam served for three months in an effort to secure train stations, protect train rails and telegraphs lines, and discourage the enlistment efforts from the South. After three months, he concluded his service.

"There were too many Germans who strictly adhered to their enlistment and when it was over, they left the service. This took place right before the Battle of Wilson's Creek (near Springfield, Missouri) which I referenced earlier. The three-month enlistment for as many as 2,000 men (heavily German) ended right before the August 1861 battle. The men were hot (temperatures ranged around 100 degrees F.), dusty, tired, hungry, and knew a battle was brewing. Even after coming 200 miles (not even half of which was by rail, the rest by foot), they up and headed to St. Louis. It was legal. They served as they had promised. But, as though war were a game, they simply left. Granted, some may have had commitments at home to family and farm or other business ventures. From historical comments we can deduce that this was not the main cause. The remaining Union force dropped to around 5,000 which was greatly outnumbered by the states-rights boys and Southern elements. Wilson's Creek was a huge victory for the South, but that force held the battlefield at the end of the encounter. At the time some felt it was a draw. But it drained the southern sympathizers and cut off a large number of like-minded sympathizers who lived in central Missouri which was named 'Little Dixie.' Had those 'three-month ' German soldiers remained for the battle, the outcome may have been decisive for the North.

"My ancestor Fritz #1 was among those who agreed to stretch their enlistment beyond the three months. There was a battle to wage, and they were ready for it. They had come so far, they did not want to "retreat" or simply give in to their initial signed agreement for service. In effect, they TRULY served their country by putting it first, above their own self-centered desires.

"Robert Rombauer, whom you mention, is notable for compiling one of the most definitive early works on the Civil War. It can be read online at: [http://archive.org/stream/unioncauseinstlo00rombiala/unioncauseinstlo00rombiala\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/unioncauseinstlo00rombiala/unioncauseinstlo00rombiala_djvu.txt) . It is mainly a firsthand report, but there are cautions. He even states this in the book. Yet, for 150 years the list of soldiers shown at the rear was accepted as 'gospel truth.' Then, in the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of the Battle of Wilson's Creek, I stumbled onto an omission. My ancestor

was not listed. Still, under legal danger of misrepresentation, he showed he served via his Federal Pension File which contained a series of legal depositions supporting that fact. Strongest of these came from one of the five Congressional medal of Honor winners who served in the artillery at the Battle of Wilson's Creek and very well could have known and seen my ancestor since he was a teamster and, of course, horses were used to haul the cannon, etc. An official at the National Battlefield at Wilson's Creek requested that I submit information to him. Based on merely three sheets of documents from the Pension File, the official responded that this was the second time in 20 years that a missing soldier was added to their list. In effect, the Rombauer list and all others based on it were obsolete. He added that this is the great thing about researching history—we still can fill in the missing elements!

"Tom, your efforts on tracing your family are admirable. Your tenacity to track down leads and information is commendable. You are an example of hard work in action, which others can emulate."

Now, a closing comment for all of us: Keep a cool head when you make an ancestral discovery. Enjoy its impact, and smile.

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**TIP: John Nischwitz** ([johnnischwitz@yahoo.com](mailto:johnnischwitz@yahoo.com)) is a capable historian on major and minor points of the Civil War. He is articulate, knows some good resources to investigate, and can suggest some good books to read on the subject.

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