



Switzerland Research Strategies

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FamilySearch

CITIZENSHIP IN SWITZERLAND

- Held by community or *Heimat*, inherited through the paternal line
- Events (birth, marriage, deaths) recorded in *Heimat*, even if a person resided elsewhere
- The words **von** (German) or **de** (French) usually indicate *Heimat* in research
- For help determining *Heimat*, see Register of Swiss Surnames at www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/famn/

USING PARISH RECORDS

- Identify all copies of an event – if a citizen is living elsewhere, identify both the original and the copy recorded in the *Heimat*
- Analyze every piece of information in the record, not just the vital data

Baptisms Records – Godparents:

- Traditions on godparents varied throughout Switzerland; each region had cultural meanings to godparents
- Usually close friends or relatives; sometimes the relationship is stated

Marriage Records:

- Permission from *Heimat* and town of residence – could be up to five copies of a marriage
- Obtain all copies – not all copies are the same

Death and Burial Records:

- Usually provides age, location; may contain information on father or spouse, occupation
- Helpful in eliminating 'candidates'

Locations:

- There may be multiple *Heimat* in one parish
- Each parish contains hamlets, villages, farms, and houses; every location is named
- Location can be used to tie generations together
- Families can change location

FAMILY REGISTERS

- Begin approximately 1800
- Each family has a separate entry, usually a separate page
- Some on printed forms; others pre-date the printed forms (like Zürich)
- Updated by the priest as events occurred
- Some are microfilmed at the Family History Library; others only available in Switzerland
- Includes citizens not living in their *Heimat* or home parish
- Note the date of creation – some may contain errors, particularly on deceased families
- Verify Family Registers with original research

CENSUS RECORDS

- 1634-1760s: Zürich, Thurgau; parts of Appenzell, Aargau, Sankt Gallen, Schaffhausen
- 1798: Men of Bern (military census). All men over 18, residence, *Heimat*, occupation
- 1810-1890: Fribourg Census, available online at FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org)
- 1836-1880: Federal censuses, only available in Switzerland

PARISH COUNCIL RECORDS, OR *CHORGERICHTSMANUAL*

- Parish “moral police” – involved with church and civil discipline
- Typically contains records on people not paying tithes, not attending church
- May contain information on Anabaptists
- Includes case entries for illegitimate children
- Marital contracts, particularly couples who want to end the marriage contract
- Land contracts, property and monetary disputes, citizenship records
- Distributions of parish funds
- Generally available only in Switzerland; some from Canton Bern available at the Family History Library

CONFIRMATION RECORDS

- Date of confirmation. This is usually a major church holiday (Easter, Christmas, Pentecost)
- Usually aged 16-20, but may include older or younger people
- May contain father’s name, residence, baptismal date
- May be located in the *Chorgerichtsmニュアル* records