K R

Uppercase K and R

The letters K and R make up one of the hardest pairs to distinguish, especially if they are not well formed. Note that the K starts at the top from the upper right, the R starts from the upper left.

BCL LLL

Uppercase B, C, and L

The B and the L are identical except for the loop at the bottom of the B. The letter C is not as elaborate as the L, but an individual's handwriting can cause a problem, so make sure you compare your record with other samples of the person's handwriting. For instance, if there is a record for a person named Barbara, that word will tell you what the writer's upper- and lowercase Bs look like.

OS

Uppercase O and S

To best distinguish between uppercase O and S, look at the curl on the top of the O and the "ears" on the top of the S.

A U

Uppercase A and U

Note the curlicue on the upper left of uppercase U, which is normally absent on uppercase A.

IJT

Uppercase I, J, and T

The uppercase *J* is a longer form of the *I*. However, in early records, these two are identical. See how far the writer's letter extends below the line and compare to other possible *J*s and *I*s of the writer for a match. The *T* is crossed at the bottom.

ÄäÖöÜü ÜäÜäÜä

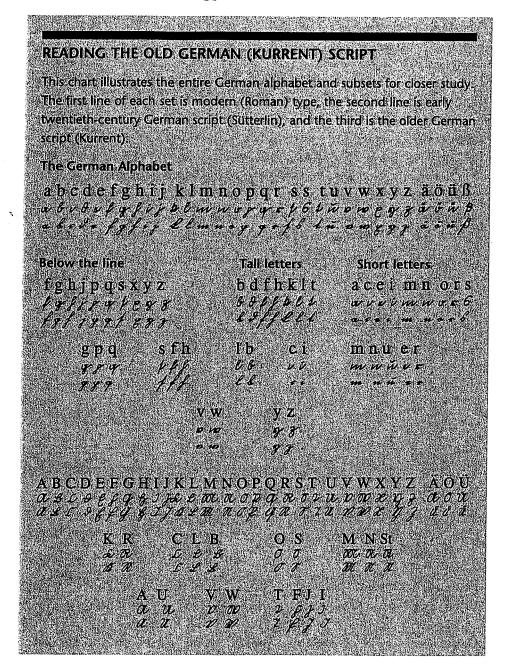
The Übigüitöüs Ümläüt

The letters a, A, o, O, u, and U with two dots over them are called umlauts. The dots, also called umlauts, indicate that the sound of that vowel is changed, with



the spelling translated into English as ae, oe, and ue. You may rarely find two dots over a y, as in the German word bey, which is an old spelling for bei.

Refer to Reading the Old German (Kurrent) Script (below) for a complete review at a glance of all the uppercase and lowercase letters.



## **Numbers**

Numerals are quite similar to English-style numerals, except that the 7 has a European-style line through it to distinguish it from a 1. Ordinal numerals, such as first, second, and third, have a suffix that is normally shown in smaller letters in superscript, sometimes also underlined.

1 7 1sten 2ten

1 7 flan 2tan

1 7 first second

## **Gothic Records**

Reading the old German writing—whether it be the older Kurrent script or the modern Sütterlin script, which was introduced in Prussia in 1915 and all of Germany by 1934, or the older Schwabacher, Fraktur, or Gotisch Old German Gothic typeface styles that were standard until the twentieth century—can be assisted by comparing the writing with the Alphabet Chart on page 74 and transcribing letter by letter.

If you want to become proficient at reading the writing, you should learn by practicing writing. If you have examples of actual genealogical documents, try copying them. Learn how to write the names of your ancestors, their places of

READING THE OLD GERMAN (FRAKTUR SCHWABACHER) TYPEFACE
This chart illustrates the entire German alphabet and subsets for closer study.  The first line of each set is modern (Roman) type, the second line is the German Gothic style (Fraktur), and the third is the German Gothic style (Schwabacher).
The German Alphabet
abedefghijklmnopqrsstuvwxyzäöüß abedefghijflmnoparfstuvmynääöüß abedefghijtlmnopqrfstuvwrv3 åoüß
Below the line Tall letters Short letters
fghjpqsxyzß bdfhklstß aceimnorsuvw jabipqfrhaß bbfhllfith aceimnorsubw fgblpqfryaß bbfbllftß aceimnorsubw
ABCDEFGHIKLMNOPORSTUVWXYZÄÖÜ NUCCCZGGGIRLMNOPORSTUVWXYZÄÖÜ NUCCCZGGGIRLMNOPONGIUWMENZWOU NUCCZGGGIRLMNOPONGIUWMENZWOU
Below the line Wide letters Crescents 'Hats' Rounded
FHIPYZ MW CEGS FII DOU ROJRYZ MM CEGS ZAZ DOU ZAZDYZ MM EEGS ZAZ DOU ZAZDYZ
Two posts   Riding a wave ~ Others NRII 'BLTV' AKX
NRU BLTV AKX NRU BLEV ARE NRU BLEW ARE