



Searching Chronicling America's Foreign Language Content Video Transcript

Working with German Fraktur

Background

In collaboration with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Library of Congress, the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio developed and produced a series of video tutorials to teach users how to work with foreign language newspapers available through Chronicling America. These build on the search skills demonstrated in the Using Chronicling America Podcast Series and Chronicling America Search Strategy Videos.

Historical Vocabulary

Description	Watch this video to learn some tips for working with Fraktur font in order to access the information contained in German language newspapers on Chronicling America. You may also find this video helpful if you're working with other German language printed materials that use a Fraktur font.
Hosts	Jenni Salamon
Duration	6:06
URL	http://www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/resources/search-help

0:01	Hi, my name is Jenni Salamon, and I work on the National Digital Newspaper Program in Ohio at the Ohio History Connection, formerly the Ohio Historical Society. In this video, I'm going to show you how to work with Fraktur font in order to access information contained in German language newspapers on the Library of Congress's Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers website.
0:22	Chronicling America is made possible through a collaboration between the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Library of Congress and state partners like the Ohio History Connection. As of August 2017, the website has over 12 million pages of historic newspaper content covering 1789 to 1924. The digitized newspaper pages are freely available and keyword searchable and more content is added on a regular basis. To date, there are about 30 German language newspapers on Chronicling America and more will be added soon. By the end of 2018, Ohio will have eight German language newspapers on Chronicling America.
0:59	Newspapers like these were important for German immigrants as they allowed them to maintain connections to their old homes in Europe while they created new ones to their homes in the United States. They are an excellent resource for finding information about German-American people and their daily lives, businesses, politics, opinions and more.



1:17	When you perform a search in Chronicling America's German language newspapers, you'll notice that almost everything is written in German which means your search term will also need to be in German, unless it's a proper noun that is the same in both English and German. You can use a dictionary or online translation tool to translate your English term to German, but you'll also need to become familiar with Fraktur font. The tips I'm about to share not only apply to newspapers, but other German language printed materials as well.
1:46	So what is Fraktur? This is a font or typeface in the blackletter or Gothic script family. If it looks old-fashioned, that's because it is. It was used in Western Europe starting in the 19 th century and remained in use in German-speaking countries well into the 20 th century. It is not, however, a separate language or dialect in German, so as long as you have the standard German-English translation tools and a couple other resources I'll show you, you should be able to make an accurate translation of a newspaper article or other printed material.
2:17	Here's a headline from the <i>Cincinnati Volksblatt</i> . Many of those letters should look familiar to you while some may seem strange and unclear what letter it is, especially if you don't speak or read German.
2:29	Here are a few articles from another issue of the <i>Cincinnati Volksblatt</i> , and the first clip you can see the words Bellevue and Dayton. These are the same as English but with the Fraktur. The second clip show Fraktur content side-by-side with English words in a plain font.
2:45	One of the best items you can have on hand when translating German Fraktur is a Fraktur chart. As I've already pointed out, some letters will look very similar to their English counterparts because both are Roman alphabets, but some look very similar to each other making it challenging to figure out what they are without comparing it to a known letter or word.
3:03	Here are some of those letters that look like each other. Upon close examination, you'll see that each letter is distinct but it may take a moment or two to figure out which one you're seeing in a particular word in a newspaper, especially if the print is small, faded or obscured in some way.
3:20	The charts I just shared with you have been adapted from these two excellent online resources from Yale University and the Beer Stein Library. If you are embarking on research that will involve Fraktur and translation, I recommend you bookmark these two websites.
3:36	Now that you have a little more background about Fraktur, let's talk about how you can get an article you find in a German language newspaper on Chronicling America from Fraktur to plain font to English. The first step is to transcribe the article to a non-Fraktur font. If you're using Chronicling America, you may be able to save yourself some time by pulling the non-Fraktur text from the text or PDF version of the page, but those are not always accurate so you may still have to do some conversion on your own.



4:04	Next, take the text you've converted and use a dictionary or online tool to translate it into English. You will know pretty quickly if a word wasn't transcribed properly if a word seems completely out of context or doesn't translate at all.
4:17	Here's an example from one of the clips I showed you earlier. The first bullet is the Fraktur font version, the second is the non-Fraktur font version and the third is the translation. When converting this to non-Fraktur, I made sure to include umlauts and looked at my Fraktur chart to ensure that I was reading the right letters, especially those that look so similar like the long S and the F. Although the translation is a bit clunky, it is close enough for me to get the gist of what is being stated here.
4:46	This is also from one of the clips I showed you earlier. I used the same process as before, but this time it was a bit trickier because the letters were smaller. My first translation wasn't accurate and I could tell because not all the words translated.
4:59	Here are a few more tips for working with Fraktur font. Get familiar with some of the words you're researching and how they look in Fraktur font so it's easier to recognize them when you're reading through a newspaper page. Also keep in mind that there is more than one font that is considered Fraktur, so letters might vary slightly from newspaper to newspaper. Again, if something doesn't translate, maybe one of the letters you transcribed isn't right so try another one that looks similar.
5:24	You may also want to learn some spelling rules, variations and English equivalents that you'll run into while researching with German language printed materials. This can help you identify letters and create accurate translations, especially when the words include special characters like the ones on the screen here. It's important that you include umlauts when translating something to make sure you're getting the correct word back.
5:46	For more information on Chronicling America and additional tutorials for using the website, please visit Ohio Memory, the collaborative digital library of the Ohio History Connection and State Library of Ohio, and Chronicling America. Thank you for viewing my screencast.