A guild is an association of trade or craftsmen designed to promote and protect their interests. They started in about the 12\textsuperscript{th} century and are still with us today, although their power and prestige have waned since the close of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century.

**Purposes of a guild**

- Train new members
- Protect trade secrets
- Care for widows and orphans
- Judge those who broke guild rules

**Levels**

- Apprentice
- Journeyman
- Master

**Apprentice**

- About 10 yrs old
- Training lasts 5-7 years
- Learns the trade or craft
- Family pays fee

**Journeyman**

- Travels to learn from different masters
- Can charge for a day’s labor
- Produces a ‘master piece’

**Master**

- Open own shop
- Employ others (journeymen)
- Take on apprentices
- Has say in affairs of guild

**Record Types**

- Vital events records
- Kinderbücher
- Apprenticeship letter
- Registers of apprentices
- Journeymen’s letters
- Wanderbücher
A short glossary for guilds
angenommen—to be taken on as an apprentice
Bursch—boy, apprentice
Geselle—journeyman
Gilde—guild
Innung—guild
Lehrbursch—boy, apprentice
Lehrgeld—the money a family pays to have their child trained
Meisterstück—masterpiece
Meisterwerk—masterpiece
Walz—time spent wandering as a journeyman
Wanderschaft—journey
Wanderzeit—time spent wandering as a journeyman
Zunft—guild

To find guild records:
FamilySearch.org > Search > Catalog > [Name of town, such as “Magdeburg”] > Occupations > [record type]

For further reading:
FamilySearch Wiki. “Germany Occupations.”
FamilySearch Wiki. “ Guilds in Germany.”
Wikipedia. “Guild.”
Wikipedia. “Jost Amman.”

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