

Obama's ancestry traces to Germany, Web site claims '

By David Rising and Christoph Noelting

BESIGHEIM, Germany -

Barack Obama in traditional German lederhosen? It may be hard to imagine, but researchers in the U.S. say they have located documents that prove the president has German roots dating to the 1700s.

According to parish records uncovered by experts at the genealogy Web site Ancestry.com, Obama's 6th greatgrandfather Johann Conrad Woelflin was born Jan. 29, 1729, in Besigheim, a small town north of Stuttgart on the Enz river where it feeds into the Neckar.

In Middletown, he married Anna Catherine Schockey in 1756 and had at least six children, including Ludwig Lewis Wolfley - Obama's 5th greatgrandfather - who was born in 1766, Tyler-said.

The investigation was started by the Web site, which determined in 2007 that Obama had Irish ancestry, after researchers decided a few weeks ago it would be fun to try to prove or disprove rumored German ancestry ahead of the president's visit to Dresden today, Tyler said.

"We'd proved the Irish, so we just wanted to see if there was any truth to the rumors of German heritage," she said. "People supposed a few different lines that went to Germany, and the one that seemed the most plausible was this Wolfley line, so that's the one we concentrated on."

Tracing the ancestry of Obama's mother, Ann Dunnham, the investigative team linked Obama back to Wolfley relatively quickly. But it wasn't until May 29 when a researcher was poring over microfilmed documents at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City that they got the breakthrough documenting Wolfley's German ties, Tyler said.