Using Hansen's Map Guides To Locate Your Ancestor's Parish Records
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Introduction

Hansen's Map Guides to Parish Registers simplify the process of locating the parish registers containing the records of your ancestors. The Guides contain detailed information about Catholic and Lutheran jurisdictions for locations within the former German Empire (including areas now in Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Denmark, and France), Switzerland and Luxembourg, and some include information about the French Reformed Church, the German Reformed Church and Jewish congregations. Given your ancestor's hometown, learn how to identify the most likely parish(es) with the records, then check the online availability of the registers on FamilySearch, Ancestry, Archion and/or Matricula.

Procedure

- Identify the ancestor's religion and hometown (city/village and German state/district).
- Look for the hometown name in the Master Index (if appropriate) and individual Town Index of the appropriate Map Guide(s).
    - The Master Index indicates *in which volume* the town can be found.
    - The Town Index indicates *on which page* in the volume the town can be found.
- If you cannot find the name of a town in the index, check whether the town has been indexed with any of the following prefixes:
    - Gross, Klein, Alt, Am, An der, Auf der, Bad, Dorf, Hof, Neu, Oster, Wester, Pölnisch, Preussisch, Deutsch, etc.
- Determine the name of the parish to which the hometown was assigned.
- If needed, use the maps to determine the names of neighboring parishes.
- Look for registers of the parish in online sites: FamilySearch, Ancestry, Matricula, Archion.
- A microfilm number published in the Parish Key in the Map Guide indicates one or more microfilms can be found in the FamilySearch catalog for that parish.
- Always search the FamilySearch catalog for your parish of interest, even if Hansen's Map Guide indicates there were not any records available at the time the Guide was printed.

Publication Structure

The 68 German Map Guides are published by German Empire state, with the following exceptions:

- Prussia: There are separate volumes for each province.
- Bavaria: There are separate volumes for each district.
  - Palatinate (Pfalz), Unterfranken, Oberfranken, Mittelfranken, Oberpfalz, Schwaben, Niederbayern I and II, Oberbayern I and II.
  - Volume 23 is an index to all the towns in Bavaria Volumes 14-22, as well as those listed in the Pfalz section of Volume 13.
- The Saxon and Thuringian duchies (what is now Thuringia) are combined into one volume.
- Large cities are published in separate volumes to help identify parishes for specific street addresses.

Map Guides are also available for Luxembourg (one volume) and Switzerland (14 volumes, one for each canton).

Resources

Barrett-Valentine, Careen. Meyer's Gazetteer: Now Online, Indexed and Fully Searchable!
https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/lessons/meyers-gazetteer-now-online-indexed-and-fully-searchable
Handout: https://familysearch.brightspotcdn.com/83/a2/88fb3b2b7ac8dadeec62b746879d/meyersgaz-org2.pdf

FamilySearch, 2015. Map Guide to German Parish Registers. Germany "How to" Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction. https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/img_auth.php/8/8b/1-Map_Guide%2C_Instruction.pdf

FamilySearch Help Center, 2016. Map Guide to German Parish Registers. Video lesson.
https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/lessons/hansens-map-guides-finding-records-with-parish-maps
Handout 1: Exercise with answers. | Handout 2: Guide to Volumes 1-53.

FamilySearch Catalog, 2023. Map Guides to German Parish Registers, Volumes 1-68.

FamilyRoots Publishing, 2023. German Map Guides Subcategories. *Note: Links to the individual volumes include lists of all the cities in each volume and maps of the .*
https://www.familyrootspublishing.com/store/category.php?cat=163

To locate specific cities found within the Map Guide volumes, use the search engine found on the home page of the Family Roots Publishing Web site: https://familyrootspublishing.net/search
Note many town names can be found in multiple volumes, and there are often multiple towns with the same name.

Record Sources

FamilySearch Catalog. Sign in using your free account. Always search the catalog for your parish of interest, even if Hansen's Map Guide indicates there were no records available at the time the Guide was printed.
https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/

Archion. A collaboration of most Evangelical church archives in Germany with the goal of publishing their digitized records online. New digitized parish registers are added regularly. A subscription is required to access the images. Before buying a subscription, search first to see if your parish records are digitally available. In some areas, "index only" collections available on Ancestry.com can be used in conjunction with the images found on Archion. https://www.archion.de/en/the-portal/
Archion is continuously updating their digitized church books. Check out the latest updates here:
https://www.archion.de/en/news/recently-added/

Matricula. A free portal for online images of European church records. It is interdenominational and reaches across geographic borders. Currently, the site provides access to records from 17 of the 27 German Catholic dioceses, many parts of Austria and Luxembourg, and a few records from Poland, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. https://www.icar-us.eu/en/cooperation/online-portals/matricula/

Ancestry.com. German parish registers in the card catalog. Subscription required to view the images.
https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/catalog/?keyword=German%20Parish%20Registers

Germanalogy Unlocked Blog Post, 2023. My Church Records Aren't Digitized – Now What?
https://germanologyunlocked.com/my-ancestors-records-arent-digitized-now-what/

Jones, Daniel J., 2021. At Home With German Records: FamilySearch and Ancestry, Part 1 of 2.
https://www.familysearch.org/rootstech/session/at-home-with-german-records-familysearch-and-ancestry-part-1-of-2

Jones, Daniel J., 2021. At Home With German Records: Archion and Matricula, Part 2 of 2.
https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/at-home-with-german-records-archion-and-matricula-part-2-of-2