"Map Guide to German Parish Registers"

OBJECTIVES

- Find the name of the Lutheran or Catholic parish for a given town.
- Determine whether or not the FHL has records for a given parish.
- Determine which parishes should be included in an area search.

INTRODUCTION

The majority of German family history research is done using parish registers. These are the record books of baptisms, marriages, and deaths kept by parish priests. In order to use these valuable records, you first have to know your ancestor's home parish. Knowing the name of a town is a start, but you will need to be able to determine the Catholic or Lutheran parish to which that town belonged. The "Map Guide to German Parish Registers" collection will help you identify parishes.

INSTRUCTION

1. In order to find a town within the map guide collection, first determine which state/province to search. To do this you may need to consult Meyer's Gazetteer.

2. Use the list of volumes in "Reading 2" to find the map guide you need. There are map guides for all states/provinces in the German Empire except part of Silesia, which hasn't been completed yet.

3. Use the indexes at the back of the volume to find the town in question. If there are multiple volumes for the state/province, make sure to use the master index to determine which volume you need, then search the index for the appropriate volume to find the page number. The master indexes are at the back of the volumes after the index for the volume itself, unless otherwise specified in "Reading 2." Many volumes have multiple indexes. Make sure you are looking at the appropriate index.

4. The index will give you a page number for the Catholic parish and a page number for the Lutheran parish. Select the page you need based on the religion of the family you are researching. If you don't know the religion, it may be a good idea to consult both pages, and search both churches.

5. Locate the page number given in the index, and find the town again on the alphabetical Town Key on that page.

6. The number next to the town is the parish number. At the top of the Town Key (you may have to turn back a page) is a Parish Key. The parishes are numbered. Find the name of the parish using the number you found in the Town Key.

7. Now that you know the name and number of the parish, you can look at the map on the opposite page and find the parish. There is a map for each Kreis (or equivalent) within the state or province. This map view of parishes within a Kreis is very helpful. The map shows which parishes are adjacent to the parish you have identified, and which Kreis is adjacent to the map section you are viewing.

8. Look back at the Parish Key. If there is an FHL microfilm number next to the parish, then you know immediately that the library has some records for that parish. However, you do not know how many microfilms there are. You must type the name of the parish into the Family History Library Catalog to determine how many years are covered by the FHL collection, how many microfilms there are, and what is on each microfilm.

HELPFUL HINTS

Search ALL indexes for your province and/or volume, before accepting a negative search.

If you cannot find the name of a town in the index, see if 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, Preussich, Deutsch, etc.

If there is not an FHL microfilm number listed for the parish you have identified, you must STILL type it into the library catalog to ensure that there are indeed no films for that parish. The library has records for many parishes for which a film number is not given in the map guides.

If a family cannot be located in the expected parish records, consult the map and search the adjacent parishes.

Consider the possibility that a family attended the parish church of a minority religion. Most commonly, this means they were Protestant Reformed. Many minority churches can be found in the "Other Churches" section of the map guides which can be found using the table of contents.

ACTIVITY

Step	Task	Check or response
1	Locate v. 9 on Reading 2	
2	What is in this volume?	
3	Locate the book. They are on the international reference shelves by the German/Latin Quick Reference desk. The books on these shelves are not arranged by call number. Scan the shelves for the collection (they are red) and find v. 9	
4	Read "HOW TO USE THIS BOOK" on pp. 23-24.	
5	Use the index to find the town of Rommelsmühle. What is the index page?	
6	What page number do you need to identify the Lutheran parish?	
7	What page number do you need to identify the Catholic parish?	
8	Go to the Lutheran page and find Rommelsmühle on the Town Key. What is the parish number?	
9	Go to the Parish Key. What is parish called?	
10	Is there a microfilm number given for the parish?	
11	Do a place search in the FamilySearch Catalog for the parish. Are there records for this place?	
12	Make a photocopy of the maps on pp. 26, 27, and 34.	
13	Begin on p. 34 and color in the parish you located above.	
14	On p. 27, estimate the location of the parish, and shade in its approximate location.	
15	Using the previous two maps, carefully reading each map page, estimate the location of the parish on p. 26 and shade in its approximate location.	

ACTIVITY ANSWER KEY

Step	Task	Check or response
1	Locate v. 9 on Reading 2	√
2	What is in this volume?	Prussia: Hessen-Nassau I, RB Wiesbaden
3	Locate the book. They are on the international reference shelves by the German/Latin Quick Reference desk. The books on these shelves are not arranged by call number. Scan the shelves for the collection (they are red) and find v. 9	√
4	Read "HOW TO USE THIS BOOK" on pp. 23-24.	√
5	Use the index to find the town of Rommelsmühle. What is the index page?	41
6	What page number do you need to identify the Lutheran parish?	36
7	What page number do you need to identify the Catholic parish?	93
8	Go to the Lutheran page and find Rommelsmühle on the Town Key. What is the parish number?	6
9	Go to the Parish Key. What is parish called?	Eibelshausen
10	Is there a microfilm number given for the parish?	No
11	Do a place search in the FamilySearch Catalog for the parish. Are there records for this place?	Yes*
12	Make a photocopy of the maps on pp. 26, 27, and 34.	√
13	Begin on p. 34 and color in the parish you located above.	See "Image 1"
14	On p. 27, estimate the location of the parish, and shade in its approximate location.	See "Image 2"
15	Using the previous two maps, carefully reading each map page, estimate the location of the parish on p. 26 and shade in its approximate location.	See "Image 3"

* The catalog tells you that Eibelshausen belonged to the parish of Bergebersbach. The map guide just told you that Eibelshausen is its own parish. Both are true. The records you found in the catalog are for the years 1817-1874. During that time, Eibelshausen belonged to the parish of Bergebersbach. The Eibelshausen parish wasn't created until 1894. (Think of LDS ward and stake boundary changes.) The gazetteer used to create the map guide was based on a 1905 census which was after Eibelshausen parish was created. You don't need to know how to come up with this kind of explanation. You just need to remember to ALWAYS CHECK THE CATALOG.