"Map Guide to German Parish Registers"

Germany "How to" Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

September 2015

OBJECTIVE

This guide will teach you to use Kevan Hansen's "Map Guide to German Parish Registers" to determine the Lutheran or Catholic parish for a German town. The resources discussed in this guide are available at the Family History Library and successful completion of this guide requires access to them.

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

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.

Use the list of volumes at https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/1197284 to find the map guide you need. There are currently map guides for all states/provinces in the German Empire except Silesia.

Use the indexes at the back of the volume to find the town in question. Some volumes have multiple indexes. There are master indexes, volume-specific indexes, and sometimes there are two volume-specific indexes if there are two regions in a single volume. Make sure you are looking at the index you need.

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.

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

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.

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.

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 FamilySearch catalog to determine how many years are covered by the FHL collection, how many microfilms there are, and what is on each microfilm.

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.

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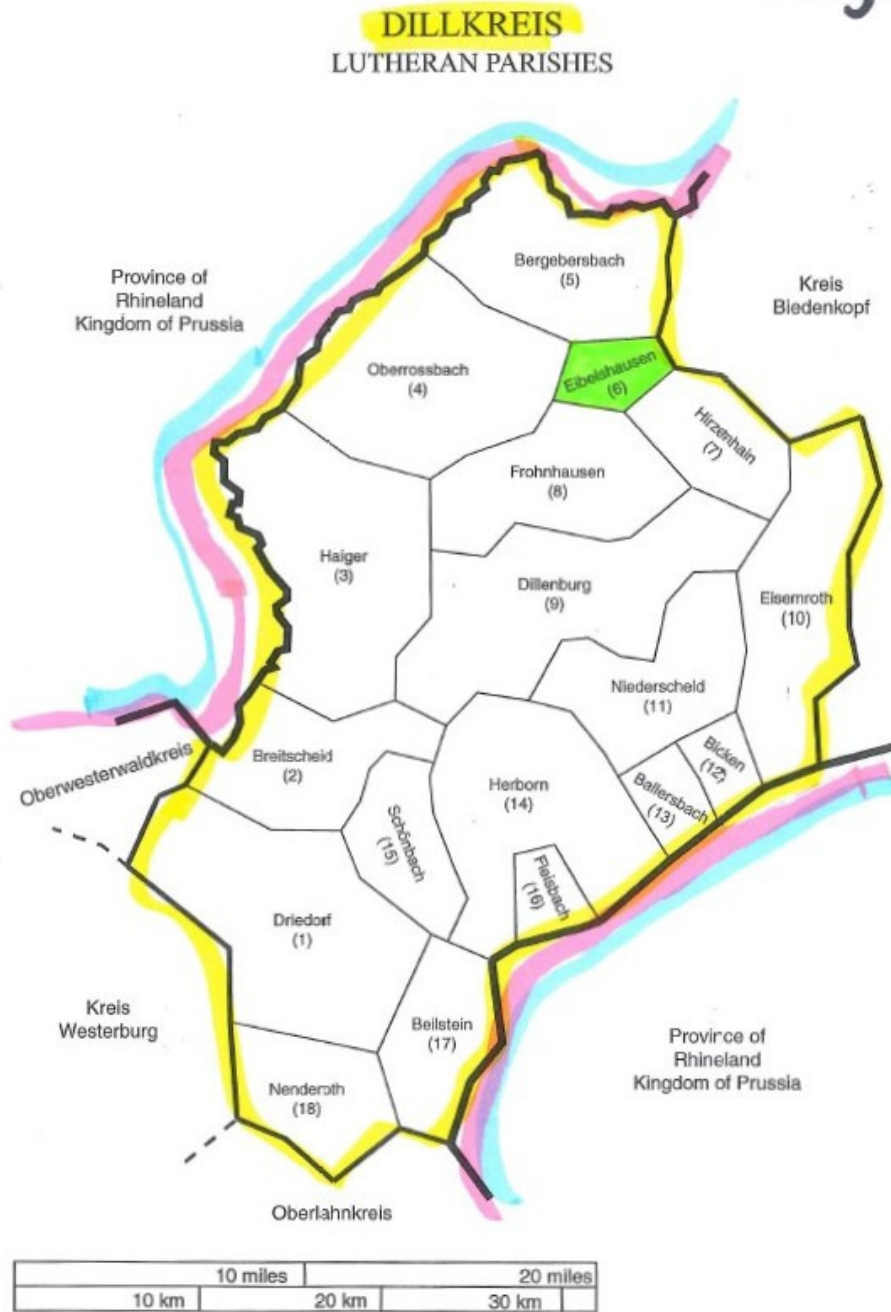
A word of caution… If there is not an FHL microfilm number listed for the parish you have identified, you must STILL type it into the library catalog to ensure that there are indeed no films for that parish. The library has records for many parishes for which a film number is not given in the map guides.

ACTIVITY

1. Locate v. 9 on Reading 2. It should be "Prussia: Hessen-Nassau I, Regierungsbezirk Wiesbaden."

2. 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.

3. Read "HOW TO USE THIS BOOK," on pp. 23-24.

4. Use the index to find the town of Rommelsmühle. It should be on index page 41.

5. The index tells you to look for the Lutheran parish on page 36 and the Catholic parish on page 93.

6. Go to the Lutheran page (36) and find Rommelsmühle on the Town Key. This tells you that this parish number is 6.

7. Go to the Parish Key. This tells you that the Lutheran parish was at Eibelshausen.

8. Note that the Parish Key doesn't give a microfilm number for the Eibelshausen church records.

9. Do a place search in the Family History Library Catalog for Eibelshausen. Note that there ARE records for this place. 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.

10. Make a photocopy of the maps on pages 26, 27, and 34.

11. Begin on page 34 and color in Eibelshausen parish.

12. On page 27, estimate the location of the parish and shade this in.

13. Using the previous two maps, carefully reading each map page, estimate the location of Eibelshausen parish on page 26 and shade its approximate location.

14. Check your maps against Images 1-3 below on the following pages:

Image 1:

Source: Kevan Hansen, *Map Guide to German Parish Registers* (North Salt Lake, Utah, USA: Heritage Creations, 2005); v. 9, "Kingdom of Prussia, Province of Hessen-Naussau I," p. 34.
Image 2:

Overview of districts, *Kreise,* in
Regierungsbezirk Wiesbaden

Page. 27

Kreis
Frankenberg

Province of Rhineland
Kingdom of Prussia

Kreis
Biedenkopf

Kreis
Marburg

Dillkreis

Oberwesterwaldkreis

Kreis
Westerburg

Province of
Rhineland
Kingdom of Prussia

Unterwesterwaldkreis

Oberlahnkreis

Grandduchy
of Hessen

Unterlahnkreis

Kreis
Limburg

Kreis
Usingen

Kreis
Sankt Goarshausen

Landkreis
Frankfurt am Main

Untertaunuskreis

Obertaunuskreis

Kreis Hanau
Landgericht Kassel

Kreis
Höchst

Rheingaukreis

Kreis
Wiesbaden

Stadtkreis
Frankfurt am Main

Province of
Rhineland
Kingdom of Prussia

Grandduchy
of Hessen

| 25 miles | | 50 miles | |
| 25 km | 50 km | 75 km | |

27

Source: Kevan Hansen, *Map Guide to German Parish Registers* (North Salt Lake, Utah, USA: Heritage Creations, 2005); v. 9, "Kingdom of Prussia, Province of Hessen-Naussau I," p. 27.
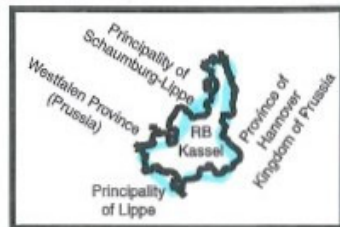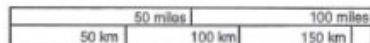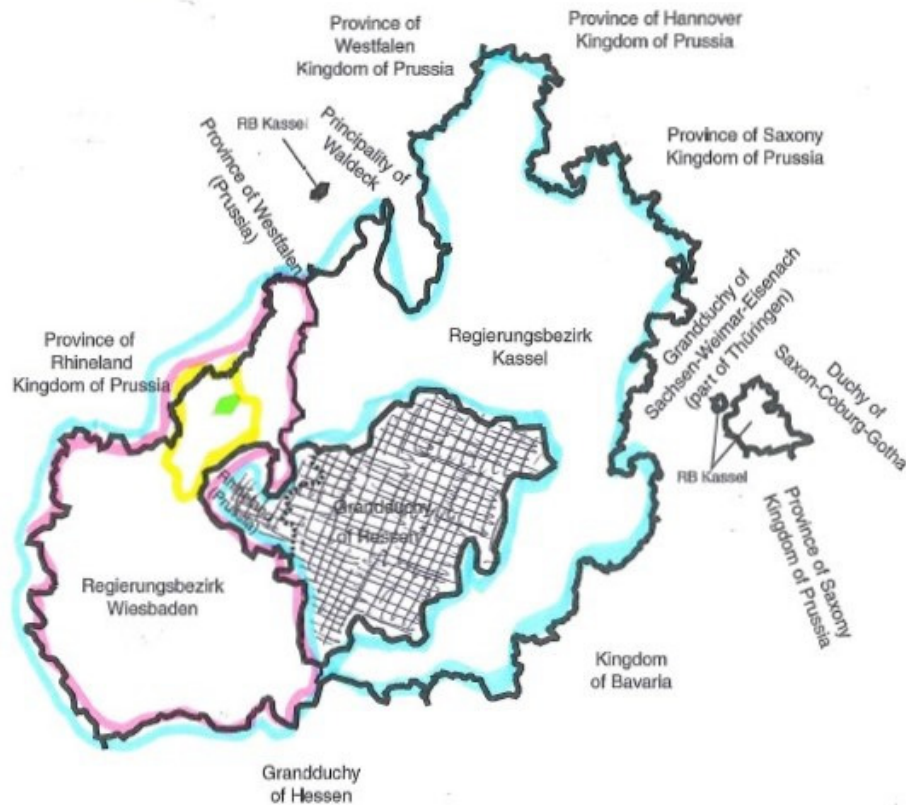Image 3:

Overview of administrative districts, *Regierungsbezirke*, in the
Province of Hessen-Nassau
Kingdom of Prussia

Page. 26

Discontinuous region located about
45 miles northwest of the main district

*Not part of Hessen-Nassau
See *Map Guide to German Parish
Registers — Grandduchy of Hessen*

26

Source: Kevan Hansen, *Map Guide to German Parish Registers* (North Salt Lake, Utah, USA:
Heritage Creations, 2005); v. 9, "Kingdom of Prussia, Province of Hessen-Naussau I," p. 27.