

# Swiss Historical Glossary Online

## Switzerland “How-To” Guide, Beginner Level: Instruction

June 2020

### GOAL

This “How to “Guide will help you use the *Glossarium Helvetiae Historicum*, or Swiss Historical Glossary, found at the web address [www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh](http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh), to find localities and determine the civil community and church parish to which they belong.

### INTRODUCTION

The default language of the Swiss Historical Glossary website located at [www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh](http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh) is German. The language can be changed in the top right-hand corner; for English, use the browser Google Chrome, right click on the website, and select **Translate to English**.

Four official languages are used in Switzerland: German, French, Italian, and Romansch. Many Swiss towns go by different names, depending on the language used. This website essentially combines two different tools: the place-name glossary (which provides translations of place names) and the historical place name book.

Besides helping with translations of place names, the Swiss Historical Glossary can also be used to look up any place found in the place name book *Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz* (Historical Dictionary of Switzerland). As well as providing historical information about the location, entries include the location of the civil community and the church parish. Many articles are available in German (D), French (F), and Italian (I).

### HOW TO

#### General information

The Swiss Historical Glossary can be used to look up places in two ways:

1. Clicking on a letter from the A-Z list on the left side of the home page.
  - This will show you an alphabetical list of the localities with their translated names, followed by the two-letter canton abbreviation.
  - In the list of place names and their translated versions, some entries include place names with references but no links to additional information. Other entries have arrows followed by links to more detailed articles.
  - In the list, the abbreviation “fr.” indicates the French name of the locality, “it.” indicates the Italian place name, and “rr” indicates the Romansch place name.

- Clicking on a place from this list will bring you to a page for that place name.
2. Clicking on the search field above the A-Z list and searching for a Swiss town.
    - This will show you the searched-for place name or, if only the beginning letters are entered, all place names beginning with those letters.
    - Diacritics can be used in the search, but they are not mandatory. **Do not** spell out the diacritic (i.e. **Zuerich** will return no matches, while **Zürich** or **Zurich** will).
    - In the results, place names are listed first. Each locality entry includes the local place name in bold, followed by the translated version in other languages. These are then followed by boxed fields showing the entries found in the Historical Dictionary of Switzerland, with the introductory phrase “Read the following articles for the search [place name] in the Historical Dictionary of Switzerland.”
    - The place name is listed in the “*Artike*” (article) column.
    - The X’s in the “*D*,” “*F*,” and “*I*” columns lead to articles about the place in the German, French, and Italian languages, respectively.
    - The last column, “*Präzisierungen*” (more precise details), lists the two-letter abbreviation for the canton in which the place is located. Some place names are followed by arrows to refer to another locality as “see” references.

## Using the website

1. Navigate to [www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh](http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh). If desired, change the default language on the top right.
2. Type the place name into the “search” field on the left and click on “**Suche**” (search).
3. Look at the results in the boxed fields to the right.
4. Choose an entry and click on the “**X**” in the “*D*,” “*F*,” or “*I*” column to access the article in the Historical Dictionary of Switzerland in either German, French, or Italian. The article comes up in a separate window. To translate to English, copy the article URL into a translation program, such as Google Translate.
5. The article’s title is the place name. Within the article itself, the place name is only listed by its initial. The civil community, or “**politische Gemeinde**” (sometimes abbreviated “polit. Gem.”), is usually listed at the beginning of the article. The church parish, or “**Kirchgemeinde**” (sometimes abbreviated “Kirchgem.”), is usually listed later. You can search for this abbreviation using “Ctrl+F.”
6. Other jurisdictional abbreviations are “**kirchl.**” (kirchlich, regarding church), “**gerichtl.**” (gerichtlich, regarding court), and “**Zivilgem.**” (Zivilgemeinde, civil community).
7. The article may include helpful details, such as information about the local economy, the names of smaller hamlets included within the boundaries, and literature about the area.

## PRACTICE

A document shows that **Christian Zollinger** was **born in Pfaffikon**, Switzerland. Another document mentions **Bauma**. Determine where you need to look for church records of Christian.

- Type “**Pfaffikon**” into the search field at [www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh](http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh) and click on “**Suche.**” The results show two “Pfäffikon”—one in canton SZ (**Schwyz**), and one in ZH (**Zürich**).
- In a new tab, navigate to [www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh](http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh) again and search for “**Bauma.**” There is only one locality by that name. It is located in Canton **Zürich**.
- The Pfäffikon in Canton Zürich, as opposed to the one in Canton Schwyz, is the most likely birthplace of Christian Zollinger, since it is in the same canton as the other place name (Bauma) connected with him. As such, look at the “**Pfäffikon (ZH)**” article first.
  - The words “**Polit. Gem.**” indicate that this Pfäffikon is now a political community.
  - A search for the partial abbreviation “**Kirchgem**” shows that Pfäffikon had a church parish that included Bauma until 1688 and Hittnau until 1707.
- Next, return to the **Bauma** tab and click on an “**X**” to view the article for Bauma.
  - The first three words indicate that Bauma is the political community (this time written out as “**Politische Gemeinde**”) of Canton Zürich.
  - A search for “**Kirchgem**” leads to a sentence indicating that the local parish was formed from parts of Bäretswil and Pfäffikon after a church was built in 1651.
- With this information, search the FamilySearch Catalog for church records for both **Bauma** and **Pfäffikon, Zürich**.

Another ancestor was supposedly born in **Adetswil**. Learn what you can about this location.

- At [www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh](http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/ghh) type “**Adetswil**” into the search field.
- Click on an “**X**” in the fields to open the article in the Historical Dictionary of Switzerland.
- The first sentence in the article refers to Adetswil as a “**Siedlung**” (settlement) in the political community of Bäretswil. It had its own civil community until 1930.
- A search for “**Kirch**” brings up the abbreviation “kirchl.” (kirchlich), or “regarding church.” That term is followed by “**Bäretswil**”; so **Adetswil** belongs to **Bäretswil** parish today. Thus, search the FamilySearch Catalog for church records under the locality **Bäretswil**.

## ACTIVITY

You can complete the following activity to test what you learned from this “How to” Guide. [Click here](#) to go to the activity.