Meyer's Gazetteer

Germany "How to" Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you to locate entries in Meyer's gazetteer and extract key information. This guide teaches the use of resources found in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. If you cannot visit the Family History Library, check your local library or FamilySearch Family History Center for availability of the resources described in the guide.

INTRODUCTION

"Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs," or Meyer's gazetteer, is a multi-volume gazetteer of all localities in the German Empire. At the FHL, there are several copies on the reference shelves and in the stacks: INTL 943 E5mo. You can access Meyer's gazetteer online at Ancestry.com, but in this packet we will use the books.

This gazetteer is a staple for all German researchers. It includes locations that are now in Denmark, France, Poland, and Russia which were formerly German territories under the German Empire of 1871-1918.

The gazetteer contains many abbreviations; to learn what these are, click here. To learn how to access Meyer's gazetteer online, click here.

You may want to consult the following "How to" Guides before continuing:
- Germany-Fraktur Script

HOW TO

Meyer's gazetteer uses many abbreviations and you will need to know what they stand for in order to understand what is contained in its entries. In a future packet, you will learn about abbreviations used in Meyer's gazetteer. For now, you only need to know a few.

There are four items in each Meyer's entry that you need to be able locate and decipher:

1. **Town name**

   This is the entry heading. As long as you can read the Fraktur, this is pretty straightforward. However, if you are working with a misspelled town name, you may have to search using the strategies you learned in the "German Spelling Variations" training packet.

2. **State or Province**

In many cases, you will need to use another gazetteer to supplement the information you find in Meyer's gazetteer. These other gazetteers, which you will learn about in future training packets, are provincial. This means that you need to know the province a town was in, in order to determine which gazetteer is needed. The province is abbreviated in Meyer's gazetteer. Use the table at the end of this document to determine the province name. These names will naturally become very familiar to you and you will begin to recognize the abbreviations without any effort at memorization.

3. **Civil registration office (StA.)**

In order to access government records of births, marriages, and deaths, you will need to know the location of the civil registration office, or Standesamt, to which your ancestor's town was assigned. The **Standesamt** is given in the gazetteer entries. Standesamt is abbreviated: **StdA**. When you find this abbreviation in the entry, you will need to see if there is a town name after the abbreviation and before the next semi-colon. If there is a town name, this is the location of the civil registration office. If a town name is not given, the civil registration office was located in the town of the entry.

4. **Churches (ev., kath., Pfk.)**

If there was a church in the town, the entry will tell you the religion of the church. You need to know the location of the parish church in order to locate the church's records of baptisms/births, marriages, and deaths/burials. Look for the following abbreviations: **ev.**, **kath.**, and **Pfk.** If you do not see these abbreviations, there was no church in the town. If you see "ev. Pfk." there was a Lutheran parish church in the town. If you see "kath. Pfk." there was a Catholic parish church in the town. If you see "ev., kath. Pfk." There were two parish churches in the town: one Lutheran and one Catholic. If there was not a parish church in the town of the entry, you will need another gazetteer to tell you where the parish was located. You will learn how to do this in a future packet.

The following is a sample entry from Meyer's gazetteer. Use the color coded side bar to see the four key items discussed above as they appear in an entry.

Town Name "Eckbolsheim"	
State or province "Els.=Loth."	
Standesamt "StdA.,"	
Churches "ev., kath., Pfk."	

Summary:
Eckbolsheim was in Alsace-Lorraine. In Eckbolsheim, there was a civil registration

office, and Lutheran and Catholic parish churches.

PRACTICE

1. Locate the W section of Meyer's gazetteer. Some copies are separated into two volumes and some into four. Either way, it should be in the last volume. The W section begins on p. 1047.

2. Look up Woiska using what you have learned about Fraktur. Woiska is on p. 1180. Do you see it? It is the 12th entry on the page.

3. Look at the chart at the end of this packet and see if you can find one of the province abbreviations in the Woiska entry.

4. The province is on the second line of the entry. It says, "Pr., Schles.," Did you find it on the abbreviation chart? Woiska is in the Prussian province of Schlesien.

5. Now find the location of the Standesamt. Remember: the Standesamt is the civil registration office. You need to know where the residents of Woiska went to register their births, marriages and deaths with the government.

6. Did you find "StdA"? It is the very last item in the entry. We found the one exception to the rule you learned above! If the abbreviation is not followed by a comma or a semi-colon, the civil registration office was at the town named after the abbreviation. However, if the abbreviation is at the end of the entry, there is no need for a comma or semi-colon. Since there isn't a town name given, we know that Woiska was the location of the Standesamt.

7. Now see if you can find any of the church abbreviations: ev., kath., Pfk. I don't see any of those abbreviations. That means that there were no parish churches in Woiska, and we will need to consult a more specialized gazetteer for Schlesien in order to determine the locations of the parish churches.

ACTIVITY

Now, test your skills you have learned in this "How to" Guide. The Activity is a way to check your knowledge and let you know you've mastered the Guide! Click here to try out the Activity.

German States and Provinces in Meyer's Gazetteer

German abbrev. in old script	German abbrev. in modern script	Full Name	English Form
Anh.	Anh.	Anhalt	Anhalt
Baden	Baden	Baden	Baden
Bay.	Bay.	Bayern	Bavaria
Braunschw.	Braunschw.	Braunschweig	Brunswick
Bremen	Bremen	Bremen	Bremen
Els.-Loth.	Els.-Loth.	Elsaß-Lothringen	Alsace-Lorraine
Hamburg	Hamburg	Hamburg	Hamburg
Hessen	Hessen	Hessen	Hesse-Darmstadt
Lippe	Lippe	Lippe	Lippe
Lübeck	Lübeck	Lübeck	Lubeck, Luebeck
Meckl.-Schw.	Meckl.-Schw.	Mecklenburg-Schwerin	Mecklenburg-Schwerin
Meckl.-Str.	Meckl.-Str.	Mecklenburg-Strelitz	Mecklenburg-Strelitz
Oldenb.	Oldenb.	Oldenburg	Oldenburg
Pr.	Pr.	Preußen	Prussia
Pr., Brandbg.	Pr., Brandbg.	Preußen, Brandenburg	Brandenburg
Pr., Hann.	Pr., Hann.	Preußen, Hannover	Hanover
Pr., Hessen-N.	Pr., Hessen-N.	Preußen, Hessen-Nassau	Hesse-Nassau
Pr., Hohenzollern	Pr., Hohenzollern	Preußen, Hohenzollern	Hohenzollern
Pr., Ostpr.	Pr., Ostpr.	Preußen, Ostpreußen	East Prussia
Pr., Pomm.	Pr., Pomm.	Preußen, Pommern	Pomerania
Pr., Posen	Pr., Posen	Preußen, Posen	Posen
Pr., Rheinl.	Pr., Rheinl.	Preußen, Rheinland	Rhineland
Pr., Sa.	Pr., Sa.	Preußen, Sachsen	Saxony (Province)
Pr., Schles.	Pr., Schles.	Preußen, Schlesien	Silesia
Pr., Schlesw.-Holst.	Pr., Schlesw.-Holst.	Preußen, Schleswig-Holstein	Schleswig-Holstein
Pr., Westf.	Pr., Westf.	Preußen, Westfalen	Westphalia
Pr., Westpr.	Pr., Westpr.	Preußen, Westpreußen	West Prussia
Reuß ä. L.	Reuß ä. L.	Reuß Ältere Linie	Reuss elder line
Reuß j. L.	Reuß j. L.	Reuß Jüngere Linie	Reuss younger line
Sa.	Sa.	Sachsen	Saxony (Kingdom)
Sa.-A.	Sa.-A.	Sachsen-Altenburg	Saxe-Altenburg
Sa.-C.-G.	Sa.-C.-G.	Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha	Saxe-Coburg-Gotha
Sa.-M.	Sa.-M.	Sachsen-Meiningen	Saxe-Meiningen
Sa.-W.-E.	Sa.-W.-E.	Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach	Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach
Schaumb.-L.	Schaumb.-L.	Schaumburg-Lippe	Schaumburg-Lippe
Schwarzb.-Rud.	Schwarzb.-Rud.	Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt	Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt
Schwarzb.-Sond.	Schwarzb.-Sond.	Schwarzburg-Sondershausen	Schwarzburg-Sondershausen
Thür.	Thür.	Thüringen	Thuringia
Waldeck	Waldeck	Waldeck	Waldeck
Württ.	Württ.	Württemberg	Wuerttemberg