

1905 Prussia *Gemeindelexikon*

Germany “How to” Guide, Intermediate Level: Instruction

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GOAL

This guide will teach you what information can be learned from the *Gemeindelexikon für das Königreich Preußen* and to help you determine where parishes and civil registration offices were located for all former Prussian localities.

INTRODUCTION

The *Gemeindelexikon* is based on the 1905 Prussian census, and is divided into fifteen volumes. Each of the thirteen Prussian provinces has its own *Heft* or volume; the last two volumes are a general index to the entire gazetteer. It is only applicable for localities in the former Kingdom of Prussia. It is printed in *Fraktur* font; you will need to be familiar with this script.

When doing German research, it is important to know where your ancestor attended church and, after 1874, registered births, marriages, and deaths with the government. This gazetteer will provide the location of Roman Catholic and Protestant parishes, as well as civil registration offices, for each entry.

You may want to consult the following “How to” Guides before continuing:

- [Germany-Fraktur Script](#)
- [Germany-Meyer's Gazetteer](#)
- [Germany-Meyer's Online](#)

HOW TO

Availability

The *Gemeindelexikon* is available in book, microfilm and online formats. The instructions about the use of the gazetteer apply to all versions.

- Several copies of all fifteen volumes are available at the Family History Library in both book and microfilm format. Additionally, some volumes are available online. For microfilm and call numbers, as well as links to online versions, see the FamilySearch catalog entry found at: <https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/14875>. Scroll down to the Film Notes section of the catalog entry for a list of volume numbers and the provinces

they contain.

- The website Ancestry.com has an online version of the *Gemeindelexikon* available at the following site: <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=34415>. You will need to have a subscription to this site or use this site at a library that has a subscription. On the right side bar of the Ancestry.com link given above, you will see the links to each volume of the gazetteer. The general index is not available via Ancestry.com.

Reading the *Gemeindelexikon*

1. You must know the province in Prussia. Use a gazetteer such as Meyer's to determine the province; to learn how to use Meyer's gazetteer, click [here](#). Locate the appropriate volume for that province.
2. Each province's gazetteer is organized alphabetically, first by *Kreis* or county, and then by location. Each *Kreis* has its own number, as does each entry. To determine the *Kreis* and entry, go to the back of the book and check the index for the locality. After you locate the place, make a note of the two numbers which follow this place name. The first number will be written in **bold**; this is the *Kreis* number. The second number is the entry number under that *Kreis*. Neither of these numbers is page number. The index will look similar to this: Wehlitz **23** 152

Note: German umlauts are indexed as if they were spelled out completely. Thus, Oberzell would come before Övelgonne, which would come before Ogenbargen.

3. Now look at the body of the book, at the top of the right-side pages, you will see the *Kreis* numbers, followed by the name of the *Kreis*. It will look similar to this:
23. Kreis Merseburg. Note that there may be more than one *Kreis* on a page.
4. After you have located the correct *Kreis*, you will see the locality entry number lines on the far left as well as the far right. These numbers will be the same, as each location's information stretches across both pages.

The name of the location will appear in the second column on the left page. The columns that are **most useful** to you are on the right page. Find the corresponding number on the right page, and use the following columns to identify the jurisdictions:

- **Column 25** is the location of the Lutheran/Evangelical *Kirchspiel* or parish.
- **Column 26** is the location of the Catholic *Kirchspiel* or parish.
- **Column 27** is the location of the *Standesamts Bezirk* or civil registration office.

See example below:

Am 1. Dezember 1905											
Überhaupt	bekenntnis					Kirchspiel			Standesamts= bezirk		
	Katholische					Andere Christen	Juden	Anderen und unbestimmten Bekenntnisses		evangelisch	katholisch
	davon sprechen (Muttersprache)									überhaupt	
	deutsch	hol- ländisch	eine andere Sprache	deutsch und eine andere Sprache							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	

- Occasionally in the case of very small locations, you will not see the name of the location you found in the index on the right side adjacent to the correct number. This is because the location is too small, and is included in the details section at the bottom of the pages. Look here for your line number to find the smaller place name. The name of the location in the entry line is larger village to which the smaller places belong.

Further information:

For more detailed information on the other columns in the *Gemeindelexikon*, visit the FamilySearch Wiki article, found at: <https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Gazetteers>. To enlarge the headings, click on the image twice. Note that each volume may have slightly different headings.

PRACTICE

We will now find a few place names together.

Meyer's gazetteer indicates that the village we are looking for, Ankern, is in the province of Ostpreußen. Which *Heft* or volume will we be using? **Heft or volume 1**

- Now, open the book to the index which is at the end of the book. The index of this volume begins on page 319. Please note that if you are using an online version of the *Gemeindelexikon*, the image number may not match the page number. Now find Ankern. It will be in the second column. Notice that the index has 5 columns on each page. The index will answer the following questions:

What numbers follow the place name of Ankern?	You should see 22 in bold and 117
What does the first number represent?	It is the <i>Kreis</i> or county number.
What does the second number represent?	It is the line or the entry number within the section for that <i>Kreis</i> .

- Now, find the entry in the book, so that you can find where the parishes and the civil registration are located. Look until you see the number 22 at the top of the right page. It will be followed by the word "*Kreis*" and the name of the *Kreis*. This page will answer the following questions:

On what page numbers do the pages for <i>Kreis</i> 22 begin?	Pages 162-163. Remember that your entry will be on both pages.
Search for line 117. What page numbers is it on?	166 and 167
Find the Evangelical parish column. Where is the parish located	Look in column 25; it will show Gross Arnsdorf.
Where is the Catholic parish location?	Look in column 26; it will show Mohrungen.
Where is the civil registration office?	Look in column 27; it will show Gross Arnsdorf.

3. Now let's try another search. Our location is called Wittenberge. It was determined that Wittenberge was in the province of Hannover. Now answer the following questions:

Find Wittenberge in the index. What page did you find it on?	240. It is in the 4 th column. It is 15 lines from the top.
What numbers follow the locality name?	5 and 17
Which number is the <i>Kreis</i> number?	5. The <i>Kreis</i> number is always the first number
Which number is the line or entry number?	17. It is always the second number.
Does the index give the page number for the entry we need?	No. Only county and line numbers are used in the index.
Find the location using your numbers from the index. What page is it found on?	Pages 10-11
What locality is listed on the correct line?	Bieste. It is the larger locality to which Wittenberge belongs.
Where can the name Wittenberge be found?	On the bottom of page 11, under entry 17. This is where you will find Wittenberge.
Where is the Evangelical parish located?	Look in column 25; it will show Vörden.
Where is the Catholic parish located?	Look in column 26; it will show Lage.
Where is the civil registration office?	Look in column 27; it will show Rieste.

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.