Meyers Gazetteer – A Power Tool for German Research

Gina Palmer, M.S., AG®
ginapgenealogy@gmail.com

Introduction

A gazetteer presents an alphabetical list of place names with information about each location that can be used to locate it. In conducting genealogical research, gazetteers can help us find ancestral villages, as well as identify associated jurisdictions and locations where different record types are held, such as church, civil, or court records. One gazetteer, the *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs*, presents jurisdictions and boundaries as they existed between 1871 and 1918. The *FamilySearch* Catalog uses these boundaries in cataloging collections from locations within the German Empire. This class provides an overview of the online Meyers Gazetteer and how it can be a power tool in your German research.

Overview

The Meyers Gazetteer found online at www.meyergaz.org is the result of over 25 years' worth of effort by two volunteers, and it continues to be a work in progress. The website pulls together information from the following sources:

- *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs-Lexikon des Deutschen Reichs* – a large multi-volume gazetteer which intended to list every place name in the German Empire (1871-1918), published in 1912.

- *Karte des Deutschen Reiches* – a map of the German Empire, published in 1893.

- A compiled work identifying the associated Catholic or Protestant parish for a place without its own parish.

How-to instructions and additional information

1. Instructions on how to use the various functions available on website, such as *Search*, *Map*, *Ecclesiastical*, *Related*, *E-mail*, and *Feedback*, are included in the *HELP* section on the website itself. Go to www.meyersgaz.org and click on the orange *HELP* button. Some quick search guidelines include the following:

➢ Use the German spelling of a place, e.g., München, not Munich.

➢ Diacritics are not needed. Just type 'u' instead of 'ü', but do not expand to 'ue'.

➢ Use the wildcard * (an asterisk) to replace unknown letters anywhere in the place name.

➢ Try the "sounds like" search function.

➢ Filter results by region.

2. A table of the abbreviations used in the gazetteer can be found with this quick link to the *FamilySearch Wiki* page. The link can also be found towards the bottom of the *HELP* section.

3. A legend for the map is included in the *David Rumsey Map Collection* and can be accessed with this link, or by searching for "Karte des Deutschen Reiches" at www.davidrumsey.com.