

BOUNDARY CHANGES

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Over the centuries, locality jurisdictions changed in size and in jurisdictional levels. Many of the areas began as ecclesiastical districts such as dioceses or archdioceses and then changed to a nobility jurisdiction such as “Grafschaft” (county) which was ruled over by a “Graf” or count. Some evolved from a regular “Herzogtum” (duchy) to a “Grossherzogtum” (grand duchy) which Baden and Mecklenburg did. Other areas like Bavaria and Württemberg went from being duchies to kingdoms when their rulers were raised from dukes to kings. The following list identifies some of these ecclesiastical and nobility levels:

Bistum	diocese	König	king
Burgraf	burgrave	Königreich	kingdom
Erzbistum	archdiocese	Kurfürst	elector
Erzherzogtum	archduchy	Kurfürstentum	electorate
Fürst	prince	Landgraf	landgrave
Fürstentum	principality	Landgrafschaft	landgravate
Graf	count	Mark	march or borderland
Grafschaft	county, shire	Markgraf	margrave
Großfürstentum	grand principality	Markgrafschaft	margravate or margraviate
Großherzogtum	grand duchy	Propst	provost
Herrschaft	domain	Probstei	diocese
Herzog	duke	Provinz	province
Herzogtum	duchy		
Kanton	canton, district		

It is very important to know the histories of the areas of Germany your ancestors were from. Different records may have been kept for these areas during the time period they existed. For example, if you looked under “Hannover” in the Salt Lake City, Utah Genealogy Library=Catalog you would be given the following four choices:

1. Germany, Preußen, Hannover
2. Germany, Preußen, Hannover, Hannover
3. Germany, Preußen, Hannover (Königreich)
4. Germany, Preußen, Hannover (Kurfürstentum)

The four possibilities represent the following four different jurisdictions:

1. This choice would identify those records that the Library has acquired for Hannover when it was a province in the kingdom of Prussia (1866-1945).
2. The second choice identifies the records for the city of Hannover that date back to the 1300's.
3. This choice identifies records which the Library has acquired for Hannover when it was a kingdom (1814-1866).
4. The last choice lists the records the Library has during the time Hannover was an Electorate (1690's-1814).

The period of your research would determine which of the above records you should search.

City & Village Name Changes

Just as the jurisdictions changed, so too did the names of localities. City and village names evolved and changed many times over the years. These names would usually vary in their spelling

and at the same time retain a similarity in the way the locality was pronounced. For example

1. Chirihheim became Chirihaim and finally Kirchen. (Baden, Rheinland, Württemberg)
2. Wilnouwe became Aldinwilnnowe and then Altweilnau, Hessen-Nassau, Preussen
3. Annehusa became Annehusen and finally Anhauser, Sachsen

It usually took a number of years for some locality names to evolve. The following example shows how a locality name changed and evolved into its present day form:

1307Remmeswilre	1491Rimersweiler	1542Rymessweyler	1730Remmesweyler
1343Rymetzwiler	1493Rymerswilre	1572Remessweiler	1769Remmesweiler
1484Rymerswillere	1512Rymersswiler	1625Remmessweiler	
1485Rimersswiler	1527Rimerswiller	1665Remmesweyler	

Genealogy Library Catalog

The Salt Lake genealogy library uses the *Meyers Orts- und Verkehrs Lexikon* (FHL 943 - E5mo, fiche 6000001-29) [web page], as its authority for cataloging German city and town records, regardless of the variations in locality names over time. It does not catalog localities according to cultural districts unless the cultural district name was in the title of the material.

Meyers Konversations Lexikon (FHL 030.43 - M575a, fiche 6000815)

The Meyers encyclopedia was published at the time of the German Empire (prior to 1918). It is written in the German language and in the Gothic print. It provides detailed information and descriptions of former cultural districts and historical boundary changes.

Der Schlüssel/Quellenschau für Familienforscher

Both “*Der Schlüssel*” (FHL 943 - D25sc) and the “*Quellenschau für Familienforscher*” (FHL 943 - A3kp, film 0924491 items 4-6), provide indexes to periodicals and other publications. Periodicals and books provide historical and cultural information concerning former localities and districts. They also provide information on resolving genealogical research problems.

Der grosse Atlas zur Weltgeschichte (FHL 940 - E7wg)

World atlas showing governmental, ecclesiastical, cultural and historical boundary changes. Maps are in color and the text is in German. It includes a separate locality index.

Historisches Lexikon der deutschen Länder (FHL 943 - E3k)

Book showing governmental, nobility, ecclesiastical, cultural and historical jurisdictions. Text is in German. Entries are alphabetical with a separate locality index at the end. Explanation of abbreviations is found at the front.