



German Historical Geography

Identifying Jurisdictions in Germany

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FamilySearch

JURISDICTIONS

A jurisdiction is an entity, corresponding to a specific geographical area, that creates and maintains records. Different jurisdictions maintain different types of records at different times.

Why do jurisdictions matter?

- They enable the identification of records which may contain genealogical information.
- Identifying jurisdictional changes helps locate what records were created for a place for which time periods, and where those records are found.

GERMANY THROUGH TIME

1945-present: Modern Germany

1933-1945: Third Reich (mostly wartime)

1919-1933: Weimar Republic

1871-1918: German Empire

1867-1871: North German Confederation (mostly wartime)

1815-1867: German Confederation

1806-1813: Confederation of the Rhine (wartime)

800/962-1806: Holy Roman Empire

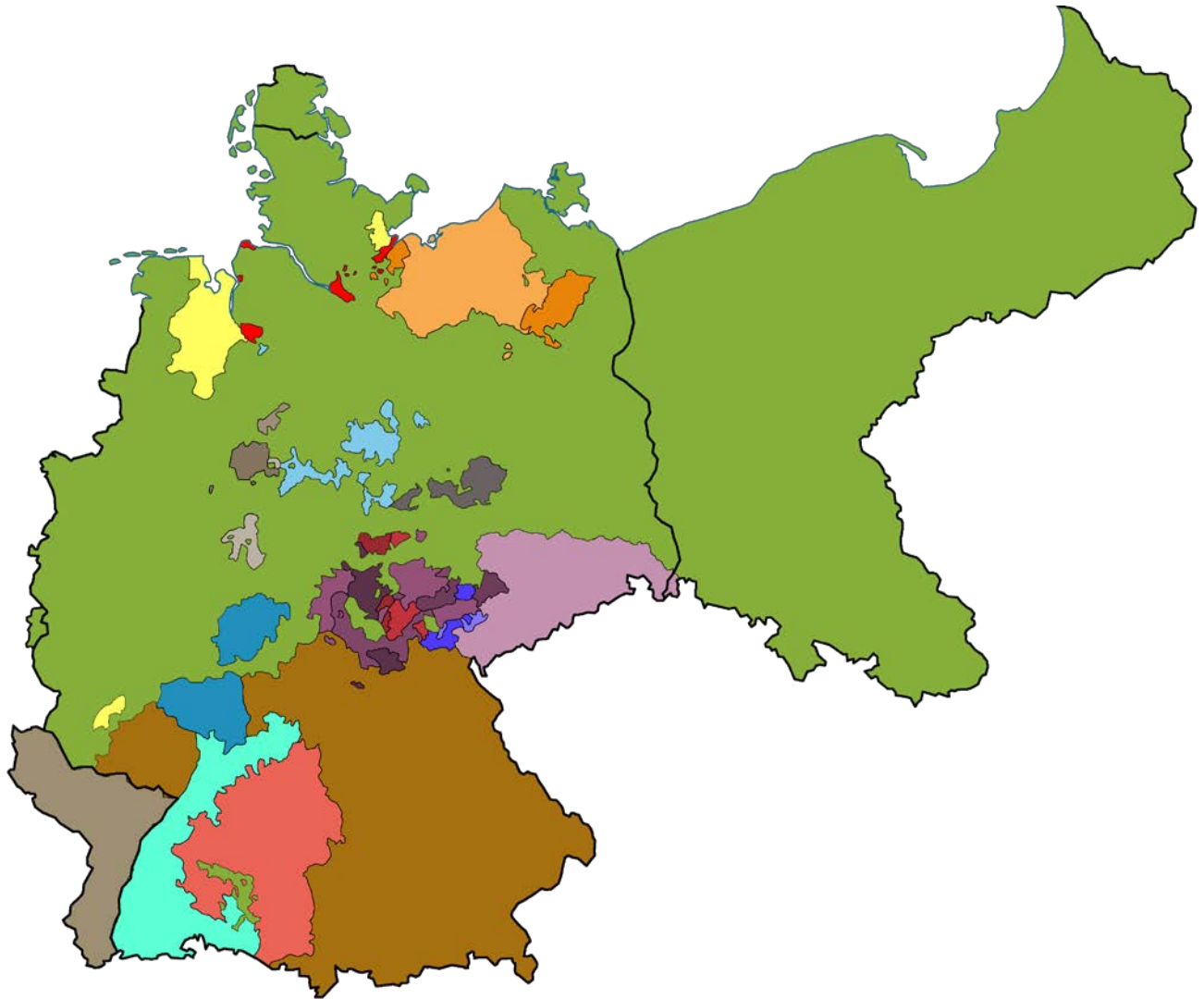
map collection found at: <http://www.hoeckmann.de/germany/index.htm>

Why use German Empire jurisdictions?

- FamilySearch Catalog uses German Empire jurisdictions
- German Empire preserved most nineteenth-century boundaries
- The German Empire covers the greatest extent of peacetime German expansion
- Germany-wide gazetteer available online: Meyer's gazetteer
- Best place to begin identifying jurisdictions, including civil or church jurisdictions

Resources for German Empire jurisdictions:

- Meyer's gazetteer, found at: www.meyersgaz.org. For help, click on "Help"
- Meyer's gazetteer "How to" Guide, found at: <http://tinyurl.com/go28a92>
- Google (town, country, and national level maps and information)
- FamilySearch – Catalog and Wiki
- Genealogy.net – click on GOV and type in the town



The German Empire was comprised of 39 constituent members. The boundaries of modern Germany are marked. The following indicates the largest member states, along with their location on the map:

-  Prussia
-  Bavaria
-  Hessen
-  Baden
-  Württemberg
-  Saxony
-  Mecklenburg

GERMAN EMPIRE JURISDICTIONS

Jurisdiction	Location	Record Type
Member State:		Possibly: Census records
Level One (largest):		Possibly: Emigration records, passport records, census records
Level Two:		
Level Three (if applicable):		
Military district: <i>Bezirkskommando</i>		Military records
Court district: <i>Oberlandesgericht (upper court)</i> <i>Amtsgericht (lower court)</i>		Court records, marriage contracts, land records
Civil registration office: <i>Standesamt</i>		Civil registration records
Church parish: <i>Kirche, Kirchspiel, Pfarrei</i>		Church records

For more information, see www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Jurisdictions

HISTORICAL JURISDICTIONS

Major time period	Main jurisdiction
Modern Germany (1946-present) <i>Deutschland</i>	
Weimar Republic (1918-1933) <i>Weimarer Republik</i>	
German Empire (1871-1918) <i>Deutsches Reich</i>	
German Confederation (1815-1867) <i>Deutscher Bund</i>	
Holy Roman Empire (prior to 1806) <i>Heiliges Römisches Reich</i>	

For more information, see https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Germany_Jurisdictions#Identifying_Historical_Jurisdictions