

A guide to

Using the *Gemeindelexikon* and Austrian Empire military maps to find your ancestor's Galician village

Galizien German Descendants Society



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One of the problems facing all researchers when starting their family's genealogy is determining where their immigrant ancestor came from. Numerous articles in genealogy magazines have been devoted to helping researchers find the name of their immigrant's village. But after finding the name of the village, the next question arises: Where was the village?

If you haven't found your village in the index for the map of Galicia, which is available, along with the map itself, on the Galizien Germans Descendants Society (GGDS) web site, and you don't have a copy of Brian Lenius' *Genealogical Gazetteer of Galicia*, then take a look at the *Gemeindelexikon*, available for free on the web. More formally, it's the *Gemeindelexikon der im Reichsrate vertretenen Königreiche und Länder, XII, Galizien*, i.e., Gazetteer of the Crown Lands and Territories Represented in the Imperial Council, Volume 12, Galicia. The gazetteer, published in 1907, uses information gathered during a census of the Austrian Empire taken in 1900. (For those of you whose research has taken you to Bukovina, volume 13 is devoted to that area and can be found on the same web site as the volume for Galicia.) The *Gemeindelexikon* is in the DjVu format, the same as used for Ludwig Schneider's book, [*Das Kolonisationswerk*](#), and, as with the book, it helps to download and install the DjVu reader and browser plug-in. The download link for those is on the GGDS web site page that discusses Schneider's book. You can view the *Gemeindelexikon* on-line without the plug-in, but it's easier if the plug-in is installed.

On the GGDS web site you'll find a link to the full *Gemeindelexikon* on-line. By looking through the alphabetical index at the end, you should find the name of your village and the page number where the village appears in the *Gemeindelexikon*. Be forewarned that some names are used by more than one village. The title page and the forward of the *Gemeindelexikon* add some unnumbered pages to the document, so add 9 to the page number that you find in the index and enter that in the page number box on the *Gemeindelexikon* web site; see the example on the GGDS web site. If all has gone correctly, you'll find your village and the information about it. The down-side, however, is all that information is in German and you still don't know the geographic location of the village. But once again, help is available, both on the GGDS web site and web sites linked on the GGDS web site.

As an example of a village that's not on the Galicia map we'll use Petranka. The *Gemeindelexikon* index says that the village is on page 262, so adding 9 gives 271 and entering that number in the box leads you to a section of the Kalusz sub-district of the Kalusz administrative district and there on the page is the entry for Petranka. Above it you'll see entries for Landestreu and Nowica, villages that are on the Galicia map, as is the town of Kalusz itself. Knowing other villages in the area will help you when searching on a map.

But where was the Kalusz administrative district in Galicia? That's where the *Gemeindelexikon* finding aid comes in. The finding aid is found on the same GGDS web page as the link to the on-line *Gemeindelexikon*, and there you'll also find links to open or download pdf's containing sections of the *Gemeindelexikon* index to simplify the process of looking up a village if you don't want to look at the entire *Gemeindelexikon* on-line.

Once again using Petranka as an example, look in the index document that includes the letter P. As before, it will tell you that Petranka is on page 262 of the *Gemeindelexikon*. Now go to the finding aid and look up page 262 in the tables at the back of the document. There you'll see that page 262 is within the section containing the Kalusz sub-district of the Kalusz administrative district and that administrative district is numbered 56 on the administrative district map included in the finding aid. Going to the numbered administrative district map, earlier in the finding aid, you'll see where the Kalusz administrative district was located within Galicia. Paging forward in the finding aid takes you to a version of the administrative district map that shows some of the larger towns in Galicia, and Kalusz is one of them, near the north end of the administrative district. If you found the names of the

administrative district and sub-district by looking in the *Gemeindelexikon* itself, you can use the finding aid to see where the district was located in Galicia. Tables are included in the finding aid listing the districts alphabetically and by district number for that purpose.

The map on the next page of the finding aid is another version of the administrative district map that has the boundaries of the Lutheran parishes sketched in, to help you find church records in the Family History Library catalog. The parish boundaries were taken from a parish map that appears in the book *Heimat Galizien im Bild* (Homeland Galicia in Pictures) and a copy of that map, showing some of the villages in each parish, is available on the GGDS web site. The map in the finding aid shows that the entire Kalusz administrative district was in the Ugartsthal parish, so records for Lutherans in Petranka, as well as Landestreu and Nowica, will be found in the Ugartsthal parish records. Note that while the parish boundaries often follow administrative district boundaries, some districts are split between parishes so you'll need to know what part of the district your village was in. The names of the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic churches to which the village belonged are given in the *Gemeindelexikon* and will be discussed below.

The page number for Petranka presents no ambiguity as to what sub-district it was in; page 262 clearly falls in the range for the Kalusz sub-district and is before the beginning of the next sub-district, Wojnilow. But what if the page number had been 266? That page is included in the Kalusz sub-district page range, but also marks the beginning of the Wojnilow sub-district. One clue is in the position of the village name in the alphabet. Because Petranka is towards the end of the alphabet it's less likely that it's in the Wojnilow sub-district because that sub-district is just starting on page 266 and the first villages listed would probably be lower in the alphabet. To be certain, look at the *Gemeindelexikon* entry to verify the sub-district. The same question can arise as to whether a village is in the last sub-district of one district or the first sub-district of the following district. Again, consider the position in the alphabet and check the *Gemeindelexikon* if you're still uncertain.

If you want to delve further into the information in the *Gemeindelexikon* about Petranka, you can go to another link on the GGDS *Gemeindelexikon* page that takes you to this page on the [HalGal](http://www.halgal.com/gemeindelexikon.html) web site: www.halgal.com/gemeindelexikon.html. There you'll find examples of the various tables of data found in the *Gemeindelexikon* and their translation into English.

Using the examples on the HalGal page as a guide to translating the *Gemeindelexikon* pages, we see that Petranka had 2154 inhabitants at the time the census was taken, of which 1091 were male and 1063 were female. Twenty-eight people in the village were Roman Catholic, 2067 were Greek Catholic, and fifty-nine were Jewish. Nineteen of the villagers were considered to be German, sixty-three were Polish, and 2072 were Ruthenian (Ukrainian). So Petranka was a predominately Ukrainian village. On the next page you'll see that the villagers owned 143 horses, 1264 head of cattle, no sheep, and 421 pigs. Don't forget to look at the back section of the *Gemeindelexikon*, also discussed on the [HalGal](http://www.halgal.com) web site, where you'll find information concerning the schools and churches for the Galician villages. The *Gemeindelexikon* lists Petranka as having its own Greek Catholic parish, and the Roman Catholics used the parish in nearby Rozniatow.

To help you narrow your search even more and finally pin down your village (we hope), you can consult the very detailed Austrian Empire military maps that are linked on the GGDS web site. On the page with the link to the map web site you'll find a table that shows the correspondence between the grid sectors on the Galicia map and the military maps that include those grid sectors. Each military map covers four grid sectors on the Galicia map and the Galicia map grid lines follow latitude and longitude lines. Kalusz, which the Galicia map index tells us is in sector D12, will be found on map 42-49, which is tagged Ivano-Frankivsk on the index map for the individual military maps. Click on the map number link in the table on the GGDS web site and the map will be downloaded. Kalusz is almost at the dead-

center of the map. If you search on the military map you'll find Petranka to the west and south of Kalusz and almost due south of Landestreu. Town names are given as they were known in the Austrian Empire, using the Austrian form of the town names, so Ivano-Frankivszk appears on the map as Stanislaw. It can be quite tedious to locate a small village on the map but having narrowed the search down to the administrative district using the *Gemeindelexikon* and finding aid and knowing nearby towns will shorten the time spent searching. Be sure to take a look at the web site that hosts the military maps because the maps cover a large portion of Europe and you may well find a map that includes your ancestor's original village in Germany. Other sites offering maps are also linked on the GGDS web site.

The numbers identifying the military maps refer to the Ferro longitude and the latitude at the center of each map. The old Ferro longitude differs from today's Greenwich longitude by seventeen degrees, forty minutes, which you would subtract from the longitude on the maps to arrive at the Greenwich longitude. See the Wikipedia article on the [Ferro Meridian](#) for a more precise definition. The latitude and Greenwich longitude can be entered into Google maps to locate your village.

As you do your research you may find that some of the villages that you have an interest in cannot be found in a modern atlas. It may be that they've been renamed or absorbed into another village. When Galicia was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the villages went by the Austrian version of their name. After the end of WWI, when Galicia reverted to Poland, the villages were known by the Polish version of their name. Poland was again partitioned at the beginning of WWII and when the western end of Galicia was reintegrated with Poland at the end of WWII, the villages kept their Polish names. But many of the villages in the eastern end of Galicia that became a part of the Ukrainian S.S.R. after WWII were given Russian or Ukrainian names, especially the villages founded by the Germans. The city that was called Lemberg by the Austrians was called L'wow by the Polish, L'vov by the Russians and finally L'viv by the Ukrainians. Further name changes occurred when Ukraine gained its independence.

The Galician Gazetteer on the [Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe](#) may help you learn your village's current name. It can be found here: http://www.sggee.org/research/village_maps. It's aimed primarily at German researchers, so it concentrates on villages known to have had German inhabitants. In it you'll see that Petranka still goes by that name, and this abbreviated gazetteer gives the current district in Ukraine, the latitude and Greenwich longitude for the village, as well as its name in Cyrillic. If you look up Landestreu, you'll find that it's been renamed Zelenyi Yar. Ugartsthal, the Lutheran parish center for Petranka and Landestreu, is now Sivka-Kaluska, having been absorbed into the Ukrainian settlement just to the south of Ugartsthal. The newer versions of the Galician German Familybooks (Ortsfamilienbücher) discussed on the GGDS web site also include the current names of many of the villages.

It takes a bit of research, but you can find your ancestral village and even pin it down on an old map of the Austrian Empire. And knowing where it is located should help you determine the parish it belonged to so you can start looking at the old church records. Start with the *Gemeindelexikon*, its finding aid, and the other aids on the GGDS web site and go from there.