

# Where does my family come from?

A research guide

**FOUNDATION FOR DISPLACEMENT, EXPULSION, RECONCILIATION**  
WHERE DOES MY FAMILY COME FROM? A RESEARCH GUIDE

**Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation**  
Where does my family come from? A research guide

Leonie Mechelhoff  
Frederike Schantz  
Jörg Schlösser

Berlin, June 2018

Updated Version  
Berlin, November 2020

Office (until the opening)  
Mauerstraße 83/84, 10117 Berlin

T +49 30 206 29 98-0  
F +49 30 206 29 98-99  
info@f-v-v.de

**flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de**

Contacts at the foundation

Archive:  
Jörg Schlösser  
T +49 30 206 29 98-23  
[j.schloesser@f-v-v.de](mailto:j.schloesser@f-v-v.de)

Library:  
Anka Lück  
T +49 30 206 29 98-17  
[a.lueck@f-v-v.de](mailto:a.lueck@f-v-v.de)

# Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Procedure</b> .....	<b>5</b>
2.1 First step: Family discussions and collecting documents.....	5
2.2 Second Step: Organize the collected information.....	5
2.2.1 Data sheets for family members.....	5
2.2.2 Analogue organization: The Kekule system .....	6
2.2.3 Genealogy programs .....	6
2.3 Third step: Professional Help or your own online research .....	7
2.3.1 Variant one: Professional help from historians and research service providers .....	7
2.3.2 Variant two: Your own online research .....	7
2.4 Step four: Research in archives .....	8
2.4.1 Regional archives .....	9
2.4.2 National archives.....	9
2.4.3 Civil registry offices .....	10
2.4.4 Standesamt I in Berlin.....	10
2.4.5 Church archives .....	10
2.4.6 Federal archive – Lastenausgleichsarchiv .....	11
2.4.7 Research on specific persons in the National Socialist period .....	11
2.4.8 Additional research options.....	12
<b>3. Useful aids</b> .....	<b>14</b>
3.1 Personal documents and waiting periods .....	14
3.2 Reading old fonts .....	14
3.3 Historical maps .....	14
3.4 Professional help from historians and research service providers.....	15
3.5 Long-term storage of documents and media.....	16
3.6 Seminars on genealogical research .....	16
<b>4. Address book</b> .....	<b>18</b>
4.1 Online resources .....	18
4.1.1 Genealogy associations.....	18
4.1.2 Commercial providers.....	20
4.1.3 Weitere Anbieter.....	21

**FOUNDATION FOR DISPLACEMENT, EXPULSION, RECONCILIATION**  
**WHERE DOES MY FAMILY COME FROM? A RESEARCH GUIDE**

4.1.4 German Embassies .....21

4.2 National archives..... 22

4.3 Church archives ..... 25

4.4 Libraries ..... 26

4.5 Search services ..... 28

4.6 Genealogy associations ..... 29

4.7 Other institutions ..... 31

**5. Literature tips..... 32**

# 1. Introduction

Where does my family come from? Who were my great-grandparents? Where did they live, and what did they experience? The Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation) seeks to offer assistance in answering these questions by publishing this guide for family research. This manual provides an overview of a sensible approach and identifies central contacts and institutions. It focuses on researching the histories of families from the former eastern provinces of Prussia and the former German settlement areas in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe.

This guide consists of three parts. The first part provides information on how to conduct systematic research. We provide a step-by-step explanation of how to proceed, advice on which aids to use, and most importantly tips on where research should be conducted. The second part provides useful information about genealogical research, for example on waiting periods for documents related to individual persons, or the proper archiving of historical documents. The third part functions like an address book, presenting essential archives, institutions and points of contact, along with contact information and literature tips.

Researching your own family's history is a very time-intensive, complex task. You should be aware of this before you start working on your project. Learning more precise information about your own ancestry, however, is often quite enriching.

For general questions related to the history and culture of Germans in eastern Europe, as well as the subjects of displacement, expulsion and forced migration, we recommend that you use the library and archive of the Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation).

Our scholarly specialized library holds German- and foreign-language books, newspapers and magazines, as well as digital media. Holdings include current research and academic literature on forced migration and "ethnic cleansings," the culture of memory, and the confrontation with displacement and expulsion.

You can view our holdings in the reading room of the library of the Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum). A shared [online library catalogue](#) offers research access to the holdings of the Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation), the Deutsches Historisches Museum (German Historical Museum), and the Alliierten Museum (Allied Museum).

The Foundation's magazine collection is currently being integrated into a magazine database and can be viewed in the [ZDB catalogue](#).

Library employees are available to answer your questions and can be reached at +49 30 206 29 98-17 or [bibliothek@f-v-v.de](mailto:bibliothek@f-v-v.de).

The Foundation archive is collecting documents related to the subject of displacement, expulsion and forced migration. These materials include personal accounts, diaries, letters, homeland chronicles, site documentation, selected photographs, maps, audio and video material, and bequests.

**FOUNDATION FOR DISPLACEMENT, EXPULSION, RECONCILIATION**  
WHERE DOES MY FAMILY COME FROM? A RESEARCH GUIDE

Archive employees are available to answer your questions and can be reached at +49 30 206 29 98-23 or [archiv@f-v-v.de](mailto:archiv@f-v-v.de).

This guide is a “living document” and will be updated on an ongoing basis. If you have information about new publications, additional research possibilities, or other tips regarding genealogical research, we would be happy to hear from you at [archiv@f-v-v.de](mailto:archiv@f-v-v.de).

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1 First step: Family discussions and collecting documents

Before doing research on the Internet or in archives, you must collect as much information as possible beforehand. You can clear up many questions in advance and collect important documents by speaking with relatives and acquaintances. It is important not to be discouraged by refusals or initial negative reactions, and to ask possible eyewitnesses several times for documents and about what they remember. Many people believe that their experiences are unimportant; consistent requests, however, can encourage them to tell their story.

You should collect all available documents, photographs, records, certificates and found objects, regardless of how important or insignificant they may seem at the time. Every piece of information could be relevant to your research. Geographical data in particular is relevant, as such information can often point the way to further research opportunities. Two useful aids here are the [Geschichtliche Ortsverzeichnis](#) (GOV; a historical index of places) and [Meyers Orts- und Verkehrslexikon des Deutschen Reichs](#) (a dictionary of places and associations in the German Reich).

You should always make a note of where you collected information and documents and make copies of original documents for your own files.

People often do not want to speak about their pasts, particularly if they experienced traumatic events or their memories are painful. For such discussions, you should therefore take your time and be gentle when asking questions.

Colleagues from the Foundation's eyewitness project are available to discuss topics such as conducting eyewitness interviews and how to deal with first-hand reports; they can be reached at +49 30 206 29 98-32 or [geschichten@f-v-v.de](mailto:geschichten@f-v-v.de).

### 2.2 Second Step: Organize the collected information

#### 2.2.1 Data sheets for family members

There are several genealogy computer programs. Nevertheless, we recommend that you first build up an analogue system and file away information and documents according to this system. We recommend setting up what are called personal data sheets and a repository in a system of binders. We find it useful to set up one binder for each grandparent in which, along with the personal data sheet, you can also store copies of documents and relevant correspondence with archives and local historians.

The personal data sheet contains the life story of family members as well as all information that has been gathered up to this point in time. This includes, among other things: information about the person's life, places where they lived or stayed, the person's appearance, education and training, professions, spouses, children, godparents, friends, professional colleagues, titles if any, honorary posts, association activities, possible emigrations, possessions and properties, military service, illnesses, life circumstances,

interests and recollections about the person. Other documents that can be collected and evaluated include diaries and journals, letters, certificates, testaments, work certificates, official decisions, newspaper articles, insurance documents and tax statements.

Photographs are also useful, both of people and of the places where they lived. Photographs of houses or map extracts can help to visualize how a family branches out within a region and will also help you to better understand your family's geography. Photographs and maps of old houses are typically among a family's possessions or can be researched through local archives and state archives.

Historical documents are often written in Kurrent or Sütterlin handwriting. For tips on how to deal with Kurrent or Sütterlin texts, see Chapter [3.2](#).

### 2.2.2 Analogue organization: The Kekule system

In order to gain an overview of relationship links, we recommend assigning numbers to individual persons. One useful way to do this is the Kekule system, a numbering system for research family histories.

In the Kekule system, the first person, called a subject, starts with the number 1, regardless of gender. This person's father is then assigned twice this value; the mother is given this value plus one. For example, the subject's father receives the number 2, and the mother the number 3.

The Kekule system is used exclusively for numbering ancestors. There are various ways to classify and organize descendants or extended family relatives – meaning the inclusion of siblings, uncles, aunts and cousins – that involve the combination of multiple numbering systems.

There is a good [overview](#) of this topic at the website of the Verein für Computergenealogie (Association for Computer Genealogy).

### 2.2.3 Genealogy programs

After you have organized your documents and information in an analogue format, you can transfer them into a digital genealogy program. These programs make it easier to evaluate the data you have collected, for example by using filter functions or creating graphical representations.

Every genealogy software has its advantages and disadvantages. A program's suitability depends on the user's individual needs. This is why it is important to take a very close look in advance at the program's various functions, so that you can choose the best software for you. Free test versions make it easier to choose.

The website of the Verein für Computergenealogie (Association for Computer Genealogy) offers an [overview](#) of popular genealogy software.

## 2.3 Third step: Professional Help or your own online research

At this point, it is worth thinking about whether you will continue searching on your own, or if you want to seek professional assistance from experienced historians or research service providers.

Doing research yourself takes a lot of time and requires skill and intensive training in various subjects. Also, traveling to individual archives in various countries, buying licenses for archiving programs, and acquiring documents can become expensive, which could make the cost of a service provider's assistance worth it.

### 2.3.1 Variant one: Professional help from historians and research service providers

[Research services and historians](#) take up their client's preparatory work (as presented in steps 1 and 2) and conduct further research. The cost of a professional service may not significantly exceed the costs you could incur in performing your own family research. This is particularly the case if you bear in mind that experienced researchers are faster and more effective in archive and online research, thereby saving you valuable working time. It makes sense to ask for a price quotation.

Receiving help from historians, however, can also be interesting for subject-related reasons. Historical documents are often difficult to read and to understand. They require context and interpretation, which calls for profound professional knowledge. Researching documents from former German settlement areas in Central and Eastern Europe requires particularly solid geographical and historical knowledge.

### 2.3.2 Variant two: Your own online research

If you are doing your own family research, the next step is online research. The Internet offers several advantageous tools, such as genealogy databases, mailing lists and forums that help to clarify questions or facilitate making contact with experts.

When researching the histories of families from the former German provinces in the East and German settlement areas in Eastern Europe, it is important to limit yourself to particular regions. It makes sense to focus particularly on the places, districts and provinces where your relatives come from.

The Internet offers search opportunities on former eastern provinces, such as the former Prussian province of [Posen](#) or [West Prussia](#). Many data collections held by associations, clubs and private persons can be reached with a simple Internet search.

For links related to online research, see Chapter [4.1](#).

We can recommend the data collections of the following websites:

#### **AGoFF**

The website of the [Arbeitsgemeinschaft ostdeutscher Familienforscher](#) (AGoFF; Working Group of German Genealogists) provides a clear overview of genealogical research and the

history of Germans in Eastern Europe. In addition to a detailed interactive map, the website offers information on the settlement history of every region, a few helpful links and literature tips for research, as well as contact data for contacts at research offices.

## GenWiki

Another source for regional research is the website of the [Verein für Computergenealogie](#) (Association for Computer Genealogy). You can search here for research on numerous localities and provinces. In addition to general information, such as geographical classification or historical developments in the respective region, this site also offers contacts and links to websites and institutions relevant to genealogy. There are also some references there to central sources and their retrievability.

GenWiki is a collaborative website. This means that users write the articles, just like Wikipedia. For this reason, some search terms yield more hits than others. If there is no successful result under a specific search term, for example the name of a place, then try continuing the search at the regional level, for example under the name of the district in which the locality exists or existed.

## German Embassies

The websites of the [German Embassies](#) in Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Riga, Moscow and Zagreb are another way to find important archives and contacts for specific regions and provinces.

The German delegations do not offer genealogical research or probate research services, but they do provide contacts and information for genealogical research in their respective countries. They often have leaflets providing information about points of contact, ways of proceeding, costs and duration of research. They also give information about obtaining legal documents and certificates from abroad.

## 2.4 Step four: Research in archives

After holding thorough discussions with relatives and acquaintances, collecting and organizing documentation, and doing initial research on the Internet, it is time to search for traces in archives and libraries to find more information about your family.

Two important tips:

In most cases, it is possible to view an overview of an archive's holdings and its reference works online. So before you visit the archive or send in a query, you can gain an overview of the places and regions for which documents are available. Archive queries should always be concise and to the point and contain the most important information necessary for successful research.

When you send in an archive query, especially to smaller or private archives, you should include return postage or otherwise indicate that you will pay for any costs that may arise. Different archives take a different amount of time to answer queries: some respond within days, others in weeks, and some even months later.

### 2.4.1 Regional archives

Your first port of call should be the archives of the particular region that you are researching. Contact data can be found online at [AGoFF](#), in [GenWiki](#) or via the [German Embassies](#).

It makes sense to write a query to archives in their respective languages, since archive employees may not have foreign language skills. Keep in mind, however, that the archive's response will also have to be translated. The Association for Computer Genealogy offers practical tips for formulating an archive query in various languages. The Computer Genealogy website also has [templates](#) for letters to archives, offices and churches, as well as translation aids for research in foreign countries.

### 2.4.2 National archives

#### National archives in Germany

National archive holdings include:

- Address listings up to 1836
- Military garrison registries beginning in 1650
- Civil registries beginning ca. 1350
- Tax registry
- Court documents

[Archivportal Deutschland](#) offers an overview of all national and state archives in Germany.

#### National archives in Poland

In Poland, it is often the case that many documents are still found where they were generated. Since 2013, the Polish national archives have placed church records and civil records [online](#). There is also an english version of the website. The website of the [Pommerscher Greif e. V.](#) Association offers a brief introduction to researching in Polish national archives.

#### National archives in the Czech Republic

The Czech archives are a central location for genealogical research in the Bohemian countries. The following links provide an overview of the Czech archives:

<https://www.sudetendeutsche-familienforscher.de/SUD/crarch-list.html>

An overview and collection of links related to historical regions of the Bohemian lands:

<https://www.sudeten.de/seite/333866/heimat-online.html>

A collection of links on genealogical research in the Bohemian countries:

<https://www.sudeten.de/seite/333861/ahnenforschung.html>

### 2.4.3 Civil registry offices

Civil registry offices maintain the register of births, marriages and deaths. These offices maintain official reporting data, which includes places of birth and maiden names, thereby offering genealogical researchers important information for further searches.

There have been civil registry offices in the territories of the German Reich since 1875; previously, personal data was kept in church registries. For the period between 1875 and 1885, it makes sense to conduct parallel research in church archives as well, because in some locations the conversion to civil registry offices did not take place immediately.

You cannot perform research on your own in civil registry offices; they provide information for a fee. They can only divulge information about direct relatives, meaning parents, grandparents or great-grandparents, as the information in the civil register is subject to data protection law.

The documents are located wherever the event occurred, meaning wherever someone was born, married or died. The civil registry office requires basic information so they can process your request, such as the place and the approximate time of the event.

The registers and consolidated files at the civil registry offices are transferred after their closure to the respective state archive, where they are made accessible for private and scholarly research in accordance with [archive law](#). For older entries, it is sensible to turn first to the relevant state archive because it often takes less time to perform research there, and it is often less expensive.

### 2.4.4 Standesamt I in Berlin

The Standesamt I (Registry Office I) is an important address for people doing research on the former German territories in Eastern Europe. This office is the international registry office for the Federal Republic of Germany and the substitute registry office for former German provinces and settlement territories. Their holdings include approximately two million certificates from the period of time between 1874 and 1945. Shortly before the end of the Second World War, the files from about 1,400 civil registry offices were brought from the former German territories in the East to Berlin, to remove them from the grasp of the Soviets. Standesamt I (Registry Office I) has worked since then on administering the documents.

You also cannot perform research on your own here. Information is subject to charges, if your information is found. It can take six to nine months to process queries.

Since the end of 2013, the holdings of Registry Office I, which are no longer subject to [waiting periods](#), are now located in the State Archive in Berlin. These holdings have been digitized by [Ancestry](#) and are gradually being indexed and placed online.

### 2.4.5 Church archives

All personal data recorded before 1874 that cannot be researched through the civil registry offices is located in church registers, which recorded the baptisms, marriages and deaths of a church congregation.

Church registers are typically no longer maintained in their communities of origin; they are usually held in central church archives. You can find out how to use these archives by inquiring directly at the state church archives.

Church registers are not viewed in the original; copies or images are provided for this purpose. Many church registers are already available digitally, for example through providers such as Archion, the church register portal of the Protestant Church in Germany. Platforms such as Ancestry, FamilySearch and MyHeritage have indexed a majority of their holdings so that they can be both viewed and searched digitally.

For more information on this, see Chapters [4.1](#) and [4.3](#).

#### **2.4.6 Federal Archive – Lastenausgleichsarchiv**

The Lastenausgleichsarchiv (Reparations Office Archive) in Bayreuth is part of the Federal Archive and functions as a central point of contact for research on the former German territories in Eastern Europe, as well as the history of German expulsions.

It contains the files of the Reparations Office, which was established in 1952. These files document the personal property of refugees and expellees from the former German provinces in the East, for the purpose of establishing an amount for reparations. The purpose of the Reparations Office was to compensate and integrate persons affected by flight and expulsion.

Information about individual refugees and expellees can be drawn from these files. These documents mirror the social and cultural relations in the former German provinces and settlement areas in Eastern Europe, as well as living conditions after fleeing these territories. The Lastenausgleichsarchiv (Reparations Office Archive) also holds the files of the “East Documentation,” which contain surveys and reports on the expulsion of the Germans.

Since January 2017, the holdings of the Church Tracing Service can also be researched in the Lastenausgleichsarchiv (Reparations Office Archive).

According to the Federal Archive, research queries will be answered within about six weeks.

#### **2.4.7 Research on specific persons in the National Socialist period**

There are four central institutions for research during the Nazi era, as well as the military past of relatives:

##### **Federal Archive**

The Federal Archive holds the documents of the [Berlin Document Centre](#). These documents contain information on membership in the NSDAP (the Nazi Party) as well as the SA and SS. In addition, there are also documents on the processes of resettlement, registration and naturalization procedures at the Einwandererzentralstelle Litzmannstadt (Central Immigration Office in Litzmannstadt).

## **Federal Archive – Military Archive**

The Military Archive in Freiburg is responsible for archive materials and the documents of the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Armed Forces and the Bundeswehr administration. You can find information here on officers and civil servants in the Wehrmacht, the awarding of military medals, and trials conducted in military courts.

## **Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt)**

The former Wehrmacht Information Office, now Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt; German National Information Office) in Berlin, provides information about existing data and documents regarding German soldiers from the Second World War to immediate family relatives, but they also process queries related to historical research.

The WASt collects all official documentation about members of the German Wehrmacht and the formations associated with it, including foreign organizations, and evaluates such documentation. The archive houses information including deployment locations, injuries, military hospital stays, the awarding of honors, reports about prisoners of war and losses suffered during the war, as well as marine staff files and grave file cards.

Since January 2017, the WASt has also been responsible for providing information about Soviet prisoners of war in German custody.

## **Denazification / Denazification court files**

[Denazification and denazification court files](#) may hold self-disclosures and information from relatives and acquaintances about the behavior of certain persons during the Nazi period. Even though statements in these kinds of files must be viewed critically, they do provide information about memberships and functions in Nazi organizations.

Denazification and denazification court files for the British occupation zone are located in the Federal Archive in Koblenz; files for the American, French and Soviet occupation zones are located in the national archives of the individual federal states.

## **2.4.8 Additional research options**

### **Local courts**

The local courts have maintained land registers since the fifteenth century.

### **Former employers**

Former employers may hold personnel documentation or information about where to find such information. These documents can be viewed upon expiration of their [waiting period](#).

### **Trade Supervisory Board**

Research on business registrations can be done with the Trade Supervisory Board.

### **Cemeteries**

All grave sites, mortality documentation and invoices for grave sites are in the possession of cemetery administrations.

### **Territorial associations**

A few websites run by the [Landmannschaften](#) (territorial associations) of the Bund der Vertriebenen (Federation of Expellees) offer information for genealogical research.

### **Local newspapers / Local history collections**

Family research in the former German territories in the East often necessitate onsite research in the hometowns of relatives.

Parish newsletters, for example, can be interesting sources. These may be held by church congregations and parishes. Furthermore, reports and newspapers from local associations and communities may be significant, along with published literature about local history.

Historical daily publications are also a central source. Regional press can be researched in the periodical holdings of the Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation).

## 3. Useful aids

### 3.1 Personal documents and waiting periods

The Personenstandgesetz (PStG; German Law on Civil Status) governs the registration of births, marriages, deaths and other changes in the personal status of families in Germany, and thereby also the maintenance and use of the civil register. The civil registers are maintained at registry offices in accordance with Section 5 subsection 5 of the PStG for the following periods:

- Marriage register (and life partnership register): 80 years
- Register of births: 110 years
- Register of deaths: 30 years

After the expiration of these periods, the registers and the affiliated consolidated files are transferred to the respective national archives, where they are made accessible to the public.

The use of documents in the archives is subject to the German Federal Archive Law or the respective state archive regulations. You can view the applicable provisions in each archive's regulations.

### 3.2 Reading old fonts

People doing family research often encounter many documents in Kurrent or Sütterlin handwriting, which are difficult to read. There are various transcription options.

- Older relatives and friends might be able to help.
- There are [reading courses](#) online.
- [Volunteer Sütterlin organizations](#) offer workshops, help with transcription, and provide support for historical research.
- A few archives offer seminars on how to read old handwriting. State, district and municipal archives also offer reading courses.
- Private service providers will transcribe old German handwriting for a fee; for example: [Sütterlin-Service](#)

### 3.3 Historical maps

#### City maps from Poland

[www.stareplanymiast.pl](http://www.stareplanymiast.pl)

The "Stareplanymiast" website offers an opportunity to compare historical maps with contemporary ones. The historical city map is superimposed on a Google map, which makes it possible to directly compare street paths, street names and structures.

The website is in Polish.

## Historical country maps of Central and Southeastern Europe around 1910

<http://lazarus.elte.hu/hun/digkonyv/topo/3felmeres.htm>

The website of the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest provides an overview of historical country maps from Central and Southeastern Europe. An overview map can be used to access individual detailed maps.

### 3.4 Professional help from historians and research service providers

There are various ways to find a professional research service:

1. The Federal Archive has published a list of research services on its website; these services predominantly offer research at the Federal Archive's various locations:

<https://www.bundesarchiv.de/EN/Navigation/Use/Commissioning-Research-Services/research-services.html>

2. Some professional genealogists have come together to form the Verband deutschsprachiger Berufsgenealogen (Association of German-speaking Professional Genealogists). This organization guarantees a serious, scholarly method of work.

Verband deutschsprachiger Berufsgenealogen  
Cheruskerweg 1  
22525 Hamburg  
T +49 40 46 77 77-35  
[info@berufsgenealogie.net](mailto:info@berufsgenealogie.net)

[www.berufsgenealogie.net/german/karte.html](http://www.berufsgenealogie.net/german/karte.html)

3. Regional genealogical associations often have addresses for contacting professional genealogists. An overview is located here:

<http://wiki-de.genealogy.net/Portal:Vereine>

4. The websites of a few national archives provide comprehensive lists of research services; for example:

<https://www.archiv.sachsen.de/recherchedienste-4016.html>

[www.hamburg.de/bkm/familienforschung/1604548/recherchedienste](http://www.hamburg.de/bkm/familienforschung/1604548/recherchedienste)

[https://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/sixcms/media.php/120/64121/Recherchedienste\\_20190204.pdf](https://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/sixcms/media.php/120/64121/Recherchedienste_20190204.pdf)

[www.nla.niedersachsen.de/download/102341](http://www.nla.niedersachsen.de/download/102341)

5. The University of Mainz offers an overview of historical service agencies and research services:

[www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-geschichteundberuf/historikerinnen-als-selbstaendige](http://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb07-geschichteundberuf/historikerinnen-als-selbstaendige)

### 3.5 Long-term storage of documents and media

If you intend to hold documents for a long period of time, please keep the following important points in mind.

Documents must be kept in acid-free boxes and folders. These can be purchased in well-stocked stationery stores or online. Paperclips, staples and transparent plastic sleeves must be carefully removed beforehand.

Photographs are particularly sensitive. The quality of images suffers even under optimal storage conditions. Special folders and photograph sleeves, made of glassine for example, are therefore recommended for storage. Photograph sleeves made of plastic cannot contain any plasticizers.

Photographs should be digitized as soon as possible for long-term storage. Negatives and slides can be digitized using a slide scanner. Due to the high cost of high-quality devices, you can think about borrowing a professional device or handing over the digitization process to a service provider. These can be found quickly by searching the Internet. Photographs can be scanned with a conventional scanner with a resolution of 300 to 600 dpi. We recommend saving photographs in the high-resolution TIFF format, not in the JPEG compressed standard format. Originals, and especially negatives, should be retained in every case.

Video cassettes hold up for 20 to 30 years. We therefore recommend that you digitize old videos. If you still have your own VHS recorder, you can use something called a video grabber to connect the VHS recorder to your computer and transfer the content of the cassettes that way. Contact professional services if you no longer have your own video recorder, or if you need to play back film formats such as Super 8 or S-VHS.

Self-made CDs and DVDs hold up for 10 to 15 years. Longer-term retention of digital documents, photographs and videos should therefore be done on external hard drives. The content of these drives should be stored on at least two additional drives, with one of these stored at a location away from your own residence (for example, with relatives). The hard drives should be reviewed at intervals of 5 to 10 years, and the content should be copied to a new hard drive.

### 3.6 Seminars on genealogical research

Seminars on genealogical research teach the necessary tools for family research and train you on how to approach your family history with sensitivity. Various archives and institutions offer courses on a broad variety of sciences related to history.

#### Local options

Many adult education centers, municipal archives, city libraries and local historical institutions offer seminars on genealogical research.

In the field of memorials, two institutions offer special seminars for family research:

### **KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme**

The KZ-Gedenkstätte Neuengamme (Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial) offers two different day-long seminars each year on the subject, "Do you have a perpetrator, collaborator, spectator or victim in your family?" The seminar provides an introduction to genealogical research and addresses possible methods of approach, problems that you may encounter, current archive law and the proper way to deal with archival materials.

For more information about the seminar, see the memorial's [website](#).

Contact:

Dr. Oliver von Wrochem

T +49 40 428 13 15-15

[oliver.vonwrochem@bkm.hamburg.de](mailto:oliver.vonwrochem@bkm.hamburg.de)

### **Stiftung Topographie des Terrors**

The Stiftung Topographie des Terrors (Foundation Topography of Terror) typically offers two seminars each year on the subject of "Family meetings. A seminar on genealogical research methods" with the participation of employees from the Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt; The German National Information Office) and the Federal Archive or the State Archives of Berlin.

Detailed information about seminar content is available at the Topography of Terror [website](#).

Contact:

Ulrich Tempel

T +49 30 25 45 09-27

[tempel@topographie.de](mailto:tempel@topographie.de)

## 4. Address book

This section of the guide lists information and contact data for useful databases, archives and service providers, as well as literature tips.

### 4.1 Online resources

#### 4.1.1 Genealogy associations

##### **Ahnenforschung.net**

[www.ahnenforschung.net](http://www.ahnenforschung.net)

Ahnenforschung.net is an online portal run on a voluntary basis. You can find tips here on getting started with genealogical research, links to genealogical research databases, discussion forums, lists of links, and a knowledge portal.

##### **Arbeitsgemeinschaft ostdeutscher Familienforscher e. V.**

[www.agoff.de](http://www.agoff.de)

The Arbeitsgemeinschaft ostdeutscher Familienforscher (AGoFF; Working Group of East German Genealogical Researchers) deals with the former German territories in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. It is one of Germany's largest genealogical associations, with about 1,000 members. The AGoFF publishes the "Zeitschrift für Ostdeutsche Familiengeschichte" ("Journal for East German Genealogical History") on a quarterly basis.

##### **Geschichtliches Ortsverzeichnis (GOV)**

[www.gov.genealogy.net/search/index](http://www.gov.genealogy.net/search/index)

The Geschichtliche Ortsverzeichnis (Historical Register of Places) is maintained by the Verein für Computer Genealogie (Association for Computer Genealogy). It offers such information as the location of a site, its historical development and former names.

##### **Meyers Gazetteer**

[www.meyersgaz.org](http://www.meyersgaz.org)

You can perform research in this database on all German places from the period from 1871 to 1928. The entries are based on Meyers Orts- und Verkehrslexikon des Deutschen Reichs, an encyclopedia of places and associations.

### **Pommerscher Greif e. V.**

[www.pommerscher-greif.de](http://www.pommerscher-greif.de)

The Pommerscher Greif is an association for genealogical and historical site research in Pomerania.

### **Society for German Genealogy in Eastern Europe**

[www.sggee.org](http://www.sggee.org)

The SGGEE is a genealogical association headquartered in Canada that focuses on researching the history and culture of Germans in Eastern Europe. Their interest is focused mainly on the territory of the former Congress Poland and the Volhynia region (in the western part of the contemporary Ukraine), yet also encompasses East and West Prussia, Pomerania, Silesia and Poznan.

Association members receive the quarterly SGGEE Journal and occasional newsletters; they also have access to the association's internal databases. The SGGEE maintains a public mailing list (in English) for research on Poland and Volhynia.

### **Verein für Computergenealogie e. V.**

The Verein für Computergenealogie (Association for Computer Genealogy) maintains a comprehensive Internet presence with information, databases, mailing lists and forums under the domain [www.compgen.de](http://www.compgen.de). These services are free of charge.

The main site is the collaborative lexicon, GenWiki, which provides a digital library, lexica, basic information on the subject of genealogy, databases and genealogical associations, as well as help functions and event notices.

Other offerings from the Computer Genealogists are collections of address books, family notices, traditional family books and albums, as well as a database for contacting researchers.

### **Association for Genealogical Research in East and West Prussia (VFFOW)**

[www.vffow.de](http://www.vffow.de)

The Association for Genealogical Research in East and West Prussia has placed online a comprehensive list of publications that is well-suited for research. The Association initiated the Allenstein Index Project, an open-access name indexing project comprised of digitized civil registry records from East and West Prussia. It is a resource for finding names and shows sources for digitized documents, files and records.

#### 4.1.2 Commercial providers

##### Archion

<https://www.archion.de/en/>

Archion is the church register portal of the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD; Protestant Church in Germany). A large portion of the church registers held by the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD; Protestant Church in Germany) and most Protestant state church organizations are available on a digital basis. About 20 million pages of church registers can currently be researched on Archion. General research is free of charge; only access to the digital archives and downloads are subject to fees.

##### Ancestry

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

Ancestry is a commercial portal that offers access to the following holdings: census reports and voter lists, registers of births, marriages and deaths, military records, information on immigration and emigration, address books and directories.

The holdings can be searched for free. Most documents can only be viewed with a subscription.

Ancestry offers an overview of civil register holdings from 1874 to 1945 from the former [East Prussian provinces](#) as well as an overview of holdings related to [Transylvania](#).

##### Deutsche Auswanderer-Datenbank

[www.deutsche-auswanderer-datenbank.de](http://www.deutsche-auswanderer-datenbank.de)

The Deutsche Auswanderer-Datenbank (DAD; German Emigrant Database) at the Historisches Museum Bremerhaven (Historical Museum of Bremerhaven) is a research project on European emigration to the United States of America. The database includes information on people who left Europe, primarily through German ports, for the USA between 1820 and 1897, and in 1904 and 1907.

Research is free, but further use of the data is subject to charges.

##### MyHeritage

[www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)

MyHeritage is a commercial platform that offers unlimited use for paying customers. Registered users upload their family research into an online database. MyHeritage makes this database available to every user. The data pool is being expanded by efforts that include cooperation with FamilySearch.

The church registers from [West Prussia](#) and [Pomerania](#) can be researched on MyHeritage.

### 4.1.3 Weitere Anbieter

#### FamilySearch

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)

FamilySearch is the Internet site for genealogical research by the Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints), also known as the Mormons. The Church provides all resources to the public free of charge. You can search FamilySearch's database for personal information (birth/baptism, marriage and death/burial) and site data, view digital copies of church registers, and upload and edit information for a family tree.

Holdings related to Germany are located [here](#).

### 4.1.4 German Embassies

The German Embassies in Prague, Budapest, Warsaw, Riga, Moscow and Zagreb offer research guides for genealogical research and probate research; however, they do not perform any genealogical research themselves.

#### German Embassy in Prague

Genealogical research and probate research in the Czech Republic

[www.prag.diplo.de/blob/1315442/cf1d0b35428ea7059da77da591d7af6a/mb-ahnenforschung-dld-data.pdf](http://www.prag.diplo.de/blob/1315442/cf1d0b35428ea7059da77da591d7af6a/mb-ahnenforschung-dld-data.pdf)

#### German Embassy in Budapest

Searching for individuals, genealogical research and probate research in Hungary

[www.budapest.diplo.de/blob/1627422/01b18d352c65fb3ba6354c42a7d44f2a/mb-personensuche-ahnenforschung-data.pdf](http://www.budapest.diplo.de/blob/1627422/01b18d352c65fb3ba6354c42a7d44f2a/mb-personensuche-ahnenforschung-data.pdf)

#### German Embassy in Bucharest

Pamphlet on finding addresses in Romania

[www.rumaenien.diplo.de/blob/2082304/d6a7adb5704c5728793cd5a32419f833/merkblatt-anschriftenermittlung-data.pdf](http://www.rumaenien.diplo.de/blob/2082304/d6a7adb5704c5728793cd5a32419f833/merkblatt-anschriftenermittlung-data.pdf)

#### German Embassy in Warsaw

Obtaining legal documents and certificates in Poland

[www.polen.diplo.de/blob/481540/a049476c6fb8fcb2a38ec051ad89a835/urkunde-mb-data.pdf](http://www.polen.diplo.de/blob/481540/a049476c6fb8fcb2a38ec051ad89a835/urkunde-mb-data.pdf)

### **German Embassy in Riga**

Pamphlet on genealogical research

[www.riga.diplo.de/lv-de/service/-/2192064](http://www.riga.diplo.de/lv-de/service/-/2192064)

### **German Embassy in Moscow**

Acquiring personal information and other documentation in the Russian Federation

[www.germania.diplo.de/ru-de/service/07-Beglaubigungen/urkundenbeschaffung/1253962](http://www.germania.diplo.de/ru-de/service/07-Beglaubigungen/urkundenbeschaffung/1253962)

### **German Embassy in Zagreb**

Finding addresses in Croatia

[www.zagreb.diplo.de/hr-de/service/anschriftenermittlung/1907312](http://www.zagreb.diplo.de/hr-de/service/anschriftenermittlung/1907312)

## **4.2 National archives**

This chapter offers a selection of useful archives for genealogical research in the former Prussian provinces in the East and German settlement areas in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe. There is an overview of all German archives in the [archive portal](#) of the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library).

### **Federal Archive**

[www.bundesarchiv.de](http://www.bundesarchiv.de)

The Federal Archive has both the largest holdings of files related to victims of Nazism as well as people who were active during the Nazi period in the upper and uppermost authorities or the justice system, as well as on members of the Nazi Party and its affiliates.

Other relevant documents involve people who were resettled as “ethnic Germans” from Central, East and Southeastern Europe into Reich territories or the occupied territories in the East and went through a naturalization process at the Central Immigration Office in Litzmannstadt.

Bundesarchiv  
Finckensteinallee 63  
12205 Berlin  
T +49 30 18 77 70-0  
[berlin@bundesarchiv.de](mailto:berlin@bundesarchiv.de)

### **Federal Archive – Lastenausgleichsarchiv**

[www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Artikel/Ueber-uns/Dienstorte/bayreuth.html](http://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Artikel/Ueber-uns/Dienstorte/bayreuth.html)

The Lastenausgleichsarchiv (Reparations Office Archive) in the Federal Archive holds the files for reparation administration and “East Documentation.” The files can only be viewed onsite; this requires an appointment made in advance.

Außenstelle Bayreuth (Lastenausgleichsarchiv)  
Dr.-Franz-Straße 1  
95445 Bayreuth  
T +49 921 460-10  
[laa@bundesarchiv.de](mailto:laa@bundesarchiv.de)

### **Federal Archive – Militärarchiv**

[www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Navigation/Meta/Ueber-uns/Dienstorte/Freiburg-im-Breisgau/freiburg-im-breisgau.html](http://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Navigation/Meta/Ueber-uns/Dienstorte/Freiburg-im-Breisgau/freiburg-im-breisgau.html)

The Military Archive Department of the Federal Archive is responsible for the archive holdings and documents of the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Armed Forces and Bundeswehr administration, as well as the personnel files of Wehrmacht officers and civil servants.

Bundesarchiv – Militärarchiv  
Wiesentalstraße 10  
79115 Freiburg/Brsg.  
T +49 761 478 17-0  
[militaerarchiv@bundesarchiv.de](mailto:militaerarchiv@bundesarchiv.de)

### **Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt)**

<https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Content/Artikel/Ueber-uns/Dienstorte/berlin-reinickendorf.html>

The Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt; German National Information Office) maintains official documentation of German soldiers in the First World War and members of the German Wehrmacht and its affiliated formations – including foreign organizations – in the Second World War. The WASt is an agency, not an archive, so you cannot perform independent research there. Users submit an electronic query that is answered in the form of an official notification. Information is subject to a fee. Waiting times are currently over one year.

Deutsche Dienststelle (WASt)  
Eichborndamm 179  
13403 Berlin  
T +49 30 419 04-0

### **Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie in Leipzig**

[www.staatsarchiv.sachsen.de/index.html](http://www.staatsarchiv.sachsen.de/index.html)

The Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie (DZfG; German Central Office for Genealogy) is part of the Saxon State Archive in Leipzig. It collects publications related to personal and family histories, including documents and unpublished manuscripts from the German-speaking world. The archive also holds images of church registers from the former German territories in Eastern Europe up to 1875, genealogical collections from the Reichssippenamt (Reich Office of Genealogy), and a collection of historical address books.

Online research for holdings and finding aids can be done via the website of the Sächsische Staatsarchiv (State Archive of Saxony). Use of the archive is free of charge. There are costs associated with reproductions; these are governed by Saxony's archive fee ordinance.

Sächsisches Staatsarchiv Leipzig  
Deutsche Zentralstelle für Genealogie  
Schongauer Straße 1  
04328 Leipzig  
T +49 341 25 555-14

### **Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz**

[www.gsta.spk-berlin.de/](http://www.gsta.spk-berlin.de/)

The Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK; Prussian Secret State Archives) is usually only useful for supplementary research. A majority of their holdings can be researched elsewhere through the civil registry offices and church archives mentioned above. Although the archive focuses on the Prussian state and its eastern provinces, the only manuscript available are for East Prussia. There is an [overview of holdings](#) for genealogical research at the GStA PK website.

Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz (GStA PK)  
Archivstraße 12-14  
14195 Berlin  
T +49 30 266 44-7500  
[gsta.pk@gsta.spk-berlin.de](mailto:gsta.pk@gsta.spk-berlin.de)

### **State archives**

The archives of the federal states hold images of church registers and civil status documents from the civil registry offices.

The [archive portal](#) offers an overview of the German national and state archives.

### **Standesamt I in Berlin**

[www.berlin.de/labo/buergerdienste/standesamt-i-in-berlin](http://www.berlin.de/labo/buergerdienste/standesamt-i-in-berlin)

The Standesamt I (Registry Office I) in Berlin manages the civil registry office documents from the former German territories in the East. Their holdings include approximately two million civil certificates from the period of time between 1874 and 1945. Documents that

cannot be delivered to the State Archive of Berlin due to applicable [data protection periods](#) can be requested and viewed onsite.

Standesamt I in Berlin  
Schönstedtstraße 5  
13357 Berlin  
T +49 30 90 269-0  
[info.stand1@labo.berlin.de](mailto:info.stand1@labo.berlin.de)

## 4.3 Church archives

### Bischöfliches Zentralarchiv Regensburg

[www.bistum-regensburg.de/bistum/einrichtungen-a-z/bischoefliches-zentralarchiv](http://www.bistum-regensburg.de/bistum/einrichtungen-a-z/bischoefliches-zentralarchiv)

The Bischöfliches Zentralarchiv (Episcopal Central Archive) collects Catholic Church registers from the former German territories in the East, especially from East and West Prussia, as well as specific German areas in Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. A majority of their holdings are only available on microfiche. Most of the originals were transferred to the respective diocese archives in Poland.

Bischöfliches Zentralarchiv  
St.-Peters-Weg 11–13  
93047 Regensburg  
T +49 941 597 25-20  
[archiv@bistum-regensburg.de](mailto:archiv@bistum-regensburg.de)

### Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin

[www.ezab.de/familienforschung.html](http://www.ezab.de/familienforschung.html)

The Evangelisches Zentralarchiv (EZAB; Protestant Central Archive) in Berlin holds about 6,000 church registers from Protestant Church congregations located in the former eastern provinces of the Protestant Union of Churches in Prussia.

The archive website offers an [overview map](#) of the former German provinces. You can find contact information for administrators for the individual provinces.

Evangelisches Zentralarchiv  
Bethaniendamm 29  
10997 Berlin  
T +49 30 22 50 45-20  
[archiv@ezab.de](mailto:archiv@ezab.de)

A large portion of the church registers have been digitized by the Protestant Church in Germany and most of the Protestant state church organizations, and they are presented on the joint portal [Archion](#).

## Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Rumänien (EKR)

[www.teutsch.ro](http://www.teutsch.ro)

The Zentralarchiv der Evangelischen Kirche in Rumänien (EKR; Central Archive of the Protestant Church in Romania) centrally administers the records of Protestant congregations in (Greater) Romania, but also of the Siebenbürger Saxon communities in Transylvania. Holdings include lifetime and posthumous bequests of persons related to ecclesiastical or minority-specific life, collections of images, graphics, posters, maps and plans, stamps and seals, photographs and films, as well as sound documents.

The archive is open to the public.

Begegnungs- und Kulturzentrum Friedrich Teutsch  
(Centrul de dialog și cultură Friedrich Teutsch)

Str. Mitropoliei Nr. 30,

RO-550179 Sibiu-Hermannstadt

T +40 269 20 67-30

[casa.teutsch@gmail.com](mailto:casa.teutsch@gmail.com)

## 4.4 Libraries

### Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung

[flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de](http://flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de)

The library's holdings include comprehensive materials related to current research and academic literature on forced migration and "ethnic cleansings," the culture of memory, and the confrontation with displacement and expulsion.

As a supplement, the Foundation also recommends the use of the following libraries of institutions engaged in the promotion of culture and scholarship under Section 96 of the German Federal Expellee Law:

### Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek

[www.martin-opitz-bibliothek.de](http://www.martin-opitz-bibliothek.de)

The Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek (Martin Opitz Library) is the central library for history and culture of the Germans in Eastern Europe. Its holdings include lifetime and posthumous bequests, publications and journals on all areas in Southern and Northeastern Europe in which Germans lived alongside other nationalities, for example Bohemia, Moravia, Transylvania, Banat, the Baltic and Russia. The collection's central holdings focus on the historical Prussian provinces in the East: Silesia, Pomerania, East and West Prussia, and East Brandenburg.

Its holdings can be researched via the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library).

Martin-Opitz-Bibliothek  
Berliner Platz 5

44623 Herne  
T +49 2323 16 28 05  
[information.mob@herne.de](mailto:information.mob@herne.de)

The following libraries have extensive holdings related to former German territories:

**Adalbert Stifter Verein (Library of the Adalbert Stifter Association) in Munich:**

[www.stifterverein.de/index.php?id=40&L=0%27%22](http://www.stifterverein.de/index.php?id=40&L=0%27%22)

**Bundesinstitut für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im östlichen Europa (Library of the Federal Institute for Culture and History of Germans in Eastern Europe) in Oldenburg:**

[www.bkge.de/EN/](http://www.bkge.de/EN/)

**Haus der Heimat des Landes Baden-Württemberg (Library of the House of the Homeland of Baden-Württemberg) in Stuttgart:**

[www.hdhbw.de/?Die\\_Bibliothek](http://www.hdhbw.de/?Die_Bibliothek)

**Museum Haus Schlesien (Library of the Museum of Silesia) in Königswinter:**

[www.hausschlesien.de/kulturundbildung/bibliothek?lang=en](http://www.hausschlesien.de/kulturundbildung/bibliothek?lang=en)

**Herder-Institut für historische Ostmitteleuropaforschung (Library of the Herder Institute for Historical Research on Central Eastern Europe) in Marburg:**

[www.herder-institut.de/en/departments/library.html](http://www.herder-institut.de/en/departments/library.html)

**Institut für deutsche Kultur und Geschichte Südosteuropas e. V. (Library of the Institute for German Culture and History in Southeastern Europe) in Munich:**

[www.ikgs.de/bibliothek](http://www.ikgs.de/bibliothek)

**Institut für donauschwäbische Geschichte und Landeskunde (Library of the Institute for Danube Swabian History and Regional Studies) in Tübingen:**

[www.idglbw.de/en/documentation/library](http://www.idglbw.de/en/documentation/library)

**Institut für Volkskunde der Deutschen des östlichen Europa (IVDE) (Library of the Institute for the Ethnology of Germans in Eastern Europe) in Freiburg im Breisgau:**

[www.ivdebw.de/bibliothek\\_und\\_archive/bibliothek](http://www.ivdebw.de/bibliothek_und_archive/bibliothek)

**Kulturwerk Schlesien (Library of the Silesian Culture Association) in Würzburg:**

[www.kulturwerk-schlesien.de/wirueberuns/geschaeftsstelle/236.Bibliothek.html](http://www.kulturwerk-schlesien.de/wirueberuns/geschaeftsstelle/236.Bibliothek.html)

**Nordost-Instituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen in Nordosteuropa e. V. (Library of the Northeastern Institute for the Culture and History of Germans in Northeastern Europe) in Lüneburg:**

[www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/nordost-bibliothek](http://www.ikgn.de/cms/index.php/nordost-bibliothek)

**Ostpreußisches Landesmuseum (Library of the East Prussian State Museum) in Lüneburg:**

[www.ostpreussisches-landesmuseum.de/en/visit/informationen-service/bibliothek/](http://www.ostpreussisches-landesmuseum.de/en/visit/informationen-service/bibliothek/)

**Stiftung Gerhart-Hauptmann-Haus (Library of the Gerhart Hauptmann House Foundation) in Düsseldorf:**

[www.g-h-h.de/index.php?id=9](http://www.g-h-h.de/index.php?id=9)

**Sudetendeutschen Haus (Scholarly library of the Sudeten German House) in Munich:**

[www.collegium-carolinum.de/en/library.html](http://www.collegium-carolinum.de/en/library.html)

**Westpreußisches Landesmuseum (Library of the West Prussian State Museum) in Warendorf:**

[westpreussisches-landesmuseum.de/en/service-2/west-prussia-library/](http://westpreussisches-landesmuseum.de/en/service-2/west-prussia-library/)

## 4.5 Search services

### Arolsen Archives

[www.arolsen-archives.org/](http://www.arolsen-archives.org/)

Arolsen Archives is an archive and a documentation center for information and research on National Socialist persecution, forced labor under the Nazis, and the Holocaust. It focuses on the search for family relatives and providing information on survivors and relatives of victims of the Nazi regime.

The extensive archive maintains holdings on imprisonment in camps or other penal institutions, on forced labor and displaced persons.

Arolsen Archives  
Große Allee 5–9  
34454 Bad Arolsen  
T +49 5691 629-0  
[info@arolsen-archives.org](mailto:info@arolsen-archives.org)

### Tracing service of the German Red Cross

[www.drk-suchdienst.de/de/suchanfragen](http://www.drk-suchdienst.de/de/suchanfragen)

The Deutsches Rotes Kreuz-Suchdienst (German Red Cross tracing service) in Munich works on tracing requests related to people who disappeared during the Second World War. The holdings include a central name index with approximately 50 million index cards from over 70 years of tracing work.

To view their documents, you must submit an official request, which can be done online. This information can be subject to fees.

DRK-Suchdienst  
Standort München  
Chiemgaustraße 109  
81549 München  
T +49 89 68 07-730  
[info@drk-suchdienst.de](mailto:info@drk-suchdienst.de)

### Gräbersuche des Volksbundes Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge

[www.volksbund.de/en/volksbund](http://www.volksbund.de/en/volksbund)

The Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge (German War Graves Commission) preserves and supervises the graves of victims of war and violence abroad. There is a [search function](#) on their website for researching the grave sites of relatives.

The Commission also maintains an [archive](#) that includes eyewitness reports, diaries and journals, correspondence from the front, photo albums and historical documents. The holdings are catalogued in a digital index and can be viewed upon appointment.

Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge e. V.  
Bundesgeschäftsstelle  
Werner-Hilpert-Straße 2  
34117 Kassel  
T +49 561 70 09-305  
[info@volksbund.de](mailto:info@volksbund.de)

## 4.6 Genealogy associations

### Verein Herold

[www.herold-verein.de](http://www.herold-verein.de)

The Verein Herold (Herold Association) is a charitable association for genealogy and heraldry. It runs an extensive archive for genealogical research. The association's holdings do not specialize in the former German territories in Eastern Europe.

The archive is run on a volunteer basis; opening hours are therefore limited, and archive use is only possible upon appointment and onsite.

In addition to the archive, the Verein Herold (Herold Association) offers a broad array of events that are interesting for genealogy: regular events, a specialized library, archival collections, information and advising services, the maintenance of a German armorial, and the publication of two journals and individual publications.

Verein Herold  
Archivstraße 11  
14195 Berlin  
T +49 30 266 44 79-00  
[geschaeftsstelle@herold-verein.de](mailto:geschaeftsstelle@herold-verein.de)

### **Institut für Personengeschichte in Bensheim**

[www.personengeschichte.de/en](http://www.personengeschichte.de/en)

The Institut für Personengeschichte (Institute for Personal History) is a documentation center for genealogy and biographical research with a specialized library. Its holdings include numerous posthumous bequests from German-speaking cultures and its neighboring European regions, as well as scholarly journals from the fields of general history, state history and genealogy.

Use of the holdings for scholarly purposes is free of charge; there is a fee schedule for private research.

Institut für Personengeschichte  
Hauptstraße 65  
64625 Bensheim  
T +49 6251 622-11  
[institut@personengeschichte.de](mailto:institut@personengeschichte.de)

### **Zentralstelle für Personen- und Familiengeschichte in Frankfurt-Höchst**

[www.ahnenforschung-hessen.de/zentralstelle](http://www.ahnenforschung-hessen.de/zentralstelle)

The Zentralstelle für Personen- und Familiengeschichte (Central Office for Personal and Family History) is a genealogical information office. It provides information about its archive holdings and refers to regional genealogical associations and societies throughout Germany. There is a focus on research in the former German territories. The archive is open to the public upon appointment.

Archiv der Zentralstelle für Personen- und Familiengeschichte  
im Bolongaropalast  
Bolongarostraße 109  
65929 Frankfurt/Main  
T +49 69 35 54 74  
[genealogy-scout@online.de](mailto:genealogy-scout@online.de)

## 4.7 Other institutions

### Jüdisches Museum Berlin

[www.jmberlin.de/en/archive](http://www.jmberlin.de/en/archive)

The Jüdisches Museum (Jewish Museum) offers information and uncommented [link recommendations](#) for genealogical research.

The museum's archive can also be used for research purposes upon appointment. Its holdings include numerous posthumous bequests, family collections and individual documents related to Jewish history.

Stiftung Jüdisches Museum Berlin

Lindenstraße 9-14

10969 Berlin

T +49 30 259 93-556

[a.pomerance@jmberlin.de](mailto:a.pomerance@jmberlin.de)

### Koordinierungsstelle Stolpersteine Berlin

[www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/en](http://www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/en)

The Koordinierungsstelle Stolpersteine Berlin (Stolpersteine Berlin Coordination Office) is not an archive, but it does provide [recommendations for research](#) on victims of National Socialism.

Koordinierungsstelle Stolpersteine Berlin

Stauffenbergstraße 13-14

10785 Berlin

T +49 30 263 98 90-14

[info@stolpersteine-berlin.de](mailto:info@stolpersteine-berlin.de)

## 5. Literature tips

Additional literature recommendations on the subject of displacement and expulsions are located at the website of the Stiftung Flucht, Vertreibung, Versöhnung (Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation) under:

[flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de/en/](https://flucht-vertreibung-versoehnung.de/en/)

Literature often used in the subject of genealogical research and paleography:

Braun, Manfred: Deutsche Schreibschrift – Kurrent und Sütterlin lesen lernen: Handschriftliche Briefe, Urkunde, Rezepte mühelos entziffern, 2015.

Bruckner, Bernd: Familien- und Ahnenforschung. Hilfe für den Einstieg und Recherchemethoden – Erstellen eines Stammbaums – Familienforschung im Internet, 2009.

Eckart, Hans W., u.a.: Paläographie – Aktenkunde – Archivalische Textsorten: "Thund kund und zu wissen jedermänniglich", 2005.

Heusterberg, Babette, Personenbezogene Unterlagen aus der Zeit des Nationalsozialismus, in: HEROLD-Jahrbuch. Neue Folge, 2000, pp. 147–186.

Holch, Christine: Was machte Großvater in der Nazizeit? Eine Anleitung zur Recherche, under: <https://chrismon.evangelisch.de/artikel/2012/was-machte-grossvater-der-nazizeit-eine-anleitung-zur-recherche-15479>

Ribbe, Wolfgang und Henning, Eckhart: Taschenbuch für Familiengeschichtsforschung, 2006.

Süß, Harald: Deutsche Schreibschrift. Lehrbuch, 2004.

Tempel, Ulrich: Familienbegegnungen, in: Gedenkstättenrundbrief 166 (6/2012), pp. 30–38, at: <https://www.gedenkstaettenforum.de/nc/gedenkstaetten-rundbrief/rundbrief/news/familienbegegnungen/>

Ziegler, Sascha (ed.): Ahnenforschung. Schritt für Schritt zur eigenen Familiengeschichte, 2008.