**Genealogy sources and archive research**

**in Germany**

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**Part 1:**

**Data protection & protection periods in German archives**

In Germany, there are various time periods for which the use of sources is restricted, depending on their age and content. Here are some examples:

Data no longer restricted according to the 2009 reforms to the German civil status laws:

* Births older than 110 years (currently up until 1910)
* Marriages older than 80 years (currently up until 1940)
* Deaths older than 30 years (currently up until 1990)

Archive laws: 60-year restricted period or longer if highly sensitive documents.

**Part 2:**

**Types of records (only a selection)**

**Address books** (at local archives and/or university libraries or online (only bigger cities))

**Census records**

Since there are no generally valid regulations and the regulations vary from state to state, refer to Roger Minert's "German Census Records 1816—1916"

**Newspapers** (at local archives and/or university libraries)

**Resident registration cards** (*Einwohnermeldekarten*) / **Building registers** (*Häuserkartei*)

(Access through city halls and resident services or at communal archives)

In towns, such cards/registers began in the 1890s/1900s. They may contain information about personal data, family members, addresses and the duration of the stay, moving to and from other places, marriages and deaths, professions, etc.

**Citizenship / travel / emigration records** (state/communal/city archives)

Alien registration, naturalization files, citizenship application files, citizenship letter, discharge papers, passport applications, permits for emigration, passenger lists, etc.

**Profession / education / career records** (state/communal/city archives)

Guild and trade membership records, education/training records, school books, class lists, report cards, university registers, apprenticeship records including information on masters and assistants, individual tax records/receipts, professional directories (e.g. scientists, actors), publications of professional associations, doctoral thesis, specialist literature, etc.

**Land/house ownership records** (state/communal/city archives)

Farm files, farm registers, farm purchase contracts, mortgage records, tax records, fire insurance records, cadastral plans, purchase contracts, historical house books, construction plans, deeds, marriage contracts, etc.

**Military / war** **/ offender and victim** **records of WWII** (state/communal/city archives, federal archives, ITS Bad Arolsen, GRC Tracing Service)

Muster lists, regiment lists, regiment diaries and journals, individual military records, medical records, victims of bombings, imprisonment, forced labour, war crimes, war trial records, denazification files, restitution files, reimbursement for losses due to the war, search for missing family members, stumbling blocks (*Stolpersteine*), etc.

**Business records** (state/communal/city archives or business archives)

Business registration records, insurance records, union records, employment/pension records, ownership records, advertising in address books and newspapers, etc.

**Court / legal records** (state/communal/city archives or courts of law)

Adoption files, guardianship files, estate records, court trial files, divorce files, criminal files, prison records, testaments/ wills, inventories, bonds, estates, marriage contracts, etc.

**Family records** (state/communal/city archives, cemetery/parish offices)

Family files, family registers in Wuerttemberg, police records (in cases of an unusual cause of death), In memoriam cards (*Totenzettel*), cemetery records (headstones often only remain for about 25 years), etc.

**Private documents** (usually in private possession)

Diaries, letters, family registers (*Stammbücher*), Aryan certificates (*Ariernachweise*); reference letters, employment/retirement documents, passports, photos, medical records, etc.

**Secondary sources/literature** (in libraries of genealogical societies and some archives)

Heritage books or local/community family books/records (*Ortsfamilienbuch*), local histories (*Ortschronik*), handwritten research notes, pedigree charts, etc. in the libraries of genealogical societies, publications about royal families (*Adelshandbuch Gotha*), publication with the family history of German dynasties (*Deutsches Geschlechterbuch*), German Family Archive (*Deutsches Familienarchiv*); books about coats of arms, house or farm marks, etc.

**Databases for heritage books or local/community family books/records**

http://www.compgen.de/ & http://ofb.genealogy.net/

**Selected local genealogical societies with their websites**

General parent organization: Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft genealogischer Verbände (DAGV); https://www.dagv.org

* Bavaria: http://www.blf-online.de/
* Bremen: http://www.die-maus-bremen.de/
* Hamburg: http://vereine.genealogy.net/GGHH/
* Mecklenburg: https://www.mfpev.de/mfp-home.html
* Unna: https://www.ahnenforscher-stammtisch-unna.de/
* (Western) Pomerania: https://www.pommerscher-greif.de

**Part 3:**

**Different types of archives in Germany**

**Federal Archive (*Bundesarchiv*)**

This institution has to secure, make available and scientifically use all archival documents of the German Federal Republic and its previous institutions. **www.bundesarchiv.de/EN**

**Bayreuth** (equalization of burdens archive)

Financial compensation for German refugees of WWII, interesting for research in former German provinces

**Berlin — Lichterfelde**

Documents from all civil central government bodies up until 1945, the GDR as well as the Berlin Document Center incl. membership in NS organizations

**Berlin — Reinickendorf (Department PA, formerly WASt)**

Personal Information of soldiers in WWI and WWII, e.g. Military and hospital records

**Freiburg (military archive)**

German military records since 1867, incl. regiment diaries, personnel files of

officers, etc.

**Koblenz (main archive)**

Documents from the constitutional organs, civil administrations, courts since 1949 as well as documents from the zones of occupation (1945—1949)

**Ludwigsburg** (central site of the State Justice Administration for solving national socialist crimes) Court files of concentrations camp trials, etc.

**Other special archives**

**German Red Cross Tracing Service (*Deutsches Rotes Kreuz Suchdienst*)**

Documents about WWII soldiers missing in action, displaced civilians, prisoners of war and civilian internees as well as children who went missing. (offer extended to 2025)

**https://www.drk-suchdienst.de/en**

**International Tracing Service (ITS) Bad Arolsen (*Internationaler Suchdienst ITS*)**

Center for documentation, information and research concerning persecution and forced labor under the Nazis as well as the holocaust; information for survivors and family members of victims of the NS regime; **https://www.its-arolsen.org/en/?caller=1**

**Political Archive of the Foreign Office (*Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts*)**

Founded in 1920, this institution holds sources concerning German foreign politics from 1867 until today; **https://archiv.diplo.de/arc-en**

**Secret State Archive of Prussian Cultural Heritage (*Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturgüter*)**

Founded in 1803, this archive holds civil and military files of the states of Brandenburg and Prussia. It is located in Berlin; **https://gsta.preussischer-kulturbesitz.de/** (in German)

**State Archives**

**Baden-Württemberg**

State Archive Baden-Württemberg (*Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg*)

**https://www.landesarchiv-bw.de/de/en/68809**

* Main State Archive Stuttgart (Duchy of Württemberg, South Württemberg)
* State Archive Freiburg (District Freiburg)
* State Archive Ludwigsburg (North Württemberg)
* General State Archive Karlsruhe (District Karlsruhe)
* State Archive Sigmaringen (District Tübingen)
* State Archive Wertheim

**Bavaria**

Bavarian Main State Archive (*Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv in Munich*)

**https://www.gda.bayern.de/english/**

* State Archive Amberg (District Upper Palatinate, *Oberpfalz*)
* State Archive Augsburg (District Swabia, *Schwaben*)
* State Archive Bamberg (District Upper Franconia, *Oberfranken*)
* State Archive Coburg (District Coburg)
* State Archive Landshut (District Lower Bavaria, *Niederbayern*)
* State Archive Munich (District Upper Bavaria, *Oberbayern*)
* State Archive Nuremberg (District Middle Franconia, *Mittelfranken*)
* State Archive Wurzburg (District Lower Franconia, *Unterfranken*)

**Berlin**

State Archive Berlin (*Landesarchiv Berlin*)

**http://landesarchiv-berlin.de/**

**Brandenburg**

Brandenburg Main State Archive (*Brandenburgisches* *Landeshauptarchiv*)

**https://blha.brandenburg.de/**

**Bremen**

State Archive Bremen (*Staatsarchiv Bremen*)

**https://www.staatsarchiv.bremen.de/**

**Hamburg**

State Archive Hamburg (*Staatsarchiv Hamburg*)

**https://www.hamburg.de/staatsarchiv/**

**Hesse**

Hesse State Archive (*Hessisches Landesarchiv*)

**https://landesarchiv.hessen.de/hessian-state-archives**

* Hesse Main State Archive in Wiesbaden (Frankfurt, Wiesbaden and others)
* Hesse State Archive in Darmstadt (County Hesse Darmstadt)
* State Archive Marburg (Hesse-Kassel, North and East Hesse )
* Hesse State Archive - civil records in Neustadt

**Lower Saxony**

Lower Saxon State Archive (*Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv*)

**http://www.nla.niedersachsen.de/startseite/**

* Lower Saxon State Archive in Aurich (East Frisia, *Ostfriesland*)
* State Archive Bückeburg (District Schaumburg)
* Main State Archive Hannover (Administrative District Hannover)
* State Archive Oldenburg (District Oldenburg)
* State Archive Osnabrück (Osnabrück, District Osnabrück, Emsland and County Bentheim)
* State Archive Stade (District Stade and Lüneburg)
* State Archive Wolfenbüttel (Principality of Wolfenbüttel and Duchy of Brunswick, *Braunschweig*)

**Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**

* State Main Archive Schwerin (*Landeshauptarchiv Schwerin*) for Mecklenburg

**https://www.kulturwerte-mv.de/Landesarchiv/Landeshauptarchiv-Schwerin/**

* State Archive Greifswald (*Landesarchiv* *Greifswald*) for Western Pomerania

**https://www.kulturwerte-mv.de/Landesarchiv/Landesarchiv-Greifswald/**

**North Rhine-Westphalia**

State Archive North Rhine-Westphalia (*Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen*)

**https://www.archive.nrw.de/landesarchiv-nrw**

* State Archive Detmold (East Westphalen-Lippe, *Ostwestfalen-Lippe*)
* State Archive Duisburg (Rhineland, *Rheinland,* incl. civil records archive Brühl)
* State Archive Muenster (Westphalia)

**Rhineland-Palatinate**

State Archive North Rhine-Westphalia (*Landesarchiv Nordrhein-Westfalen*)

**https://www.landeshauptarchiv.de/startseite/**

* State Main Archive Koblenz (incl. civil records archive)
* State Archive Speyer

**Saarland**

State Archive Saarbrücken (*Landesarchiv Saarbrücken*)

**https://www.saarland.de/landesarchiv/DE/home/home\_node.html**

**Saxony**

Saxon State Archive (*Sächsisches Staatsarchiv*)

**http://www.archiv.sachsen.de/**

* Main State Archive Dresden (Kingdom and Electorate Saxony)
* State Archive Chemnitz (Schönburg Sovereignties)
* State Archive Leipzig, incl. German Central Office for Genealogy (District Leipzig)
* Archive group Bautzen (District Oberlausitz, incl. City Archive Bautzen)

**Saxony-Anhalt**

State Main Archive Saxony-Anhalt in Magdeburg (*Landeshauptarchiv Sachsen-Anhalt*)

**https://landesarchiv.sachsen-anhalt.de/startseite/**

**Schleswig-Holstein**

State Archive Schleswig-Holstein in Schleswig (*Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein*)

**https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/Landesregierung/LASH/lash\_node.html**

**Thuringia**

State Archive Thuringia (*Landesarchiv Thüringen*)

**https://www.thueringen.de/th1/tsk/staatsarchive/index.aspx**

* State Archive Altenburg (Duchy of Saxe-Altenburg and District Altenburg)
* State Archive Gotha (Duchy of Saxe-Gotha and Duchy of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha)
* State Archive Greiz (District Greiz and Gera, Principality of Reuss)
* State Archive Meiningen (Principality of Saxe-Meiningen)
* State Archive Rudolstadt (District Jena, Arnsberg, Rudolstadt and Sondershausen)
* Main State Archive Weimar (Duchy of Saxe-Weimar)

**Additional archive types in Germany**

* district or communal archives (*Kreisarchive, Kommunalarchive*)
* city archives (*Stadtarchive*)
* university archives and libraries (*Universitätsarchive und -bibliotheken*)
* royal archives (*Herrschafts-, Haus- or Familienarchive*)
* business and company archives (*Wirtschaftsarchive, Firmenarchive)*
* church archives (*Kirchenarchive)*