



User Instructions for Genealogical Research

1. How to start right?

A visit to the archives should be well prepared in advance by way of:

- research within your family and review of documents in your family's possession;
- perusal of available printed resources such as ancestral lists, genealogical journals and family registers; and
- review of the Hessian Association of Family History which can also provide assistance in the search for ancestors (Karolinenplatz 3, 64289 Darmstadt, ☎ <http://www.hfv-ev.de>).

For a successful genealogical research, it is essential to have exact information at hand about date(s) and location(s) of birth/christening, marriage and death of the person(s) being searched for. The territorial affiliation of individual boroughs can be retraced and ascertained by using historical directories of locations, such as the Historical Encyclopaedia of Locations from the Regional History Information System (☎ www.lagis-hessen.de/de/subjects/index/sn/ol).

The State Archives Darmstadt hold the historically valuable charters and files of the authorities, institutions and private collections of the former Landgraviate (Landgrafschaft) of Hesse-Darmstadt, the former Grand Duchy of Hesse and of those territories that were ceded to the Grand Duchy of Hesse during the Napoleonic period. Furthermore, it holds the records of the People's State of Hesse and, starting as from 1945, the records of the administrative district of Darmstadt and parts of the administrative district of Gießen.

2. Researching the biographical data of persons

The church registers should be consulted regarding any researches on the dates of birth, marriage and death. You require information about confession, name and place of birth, residence or death about the person you are searching.

2.1. Biographical Data before 1808

If you are searching for a person born or deceased before 1808, you can determine that person's biographical data only through the church records. Please note that, apart from the duplicates described below in Section 2.2, the State Archives Darmstadt do not hold the church records related to its current district. The church registers are commonly located in the respective parishes or can be accessed via:

- for the Protestant Church: Zentralarchiv der EKHN (Ahastraße 5 a, 64285 Darmstadt, ☎ +49 (0) 6151 366 363, fax +49 (0) 6151 366 394, email: zentralarchiv@ekhn-kv.de, ☎ www.zentralarchiv-ekhn.de),
- for the Catholic Church: Bischöfliches Ordinariat, Dom- und Diözesanarchiv (Postfach 1560, 55005 Mainz, ☎ +49 (0) 6131 253 157, fax: +49 (0) 6131 253 406, email: archiv@bistum-mainz.de).

2.2 Duplicates of Church Registers in the State Archives Darmstadt (1808-1875)

The most important sources for genealogical history in the State Archives Darmstadt are the duplicates of the church registers (entries on births/christenings, marriage services and deaths), which cover the period from 1808 to the inauguration of the register ledgers in 1875 (Holding C 11). In the Arcinsys database (☎ <https://arcinsys.hessen.de>), the person concerned can be searched for by using the place of birth, marriage or death. However, only microfiches are available for use. The duplicates of the church registers held in the State Archives Darmstadt comprise locations in the former provinces of Upper Hesse and Starkenburg. In the Hessian province of Rhine-Hesse, which was created in 1816, registers for births, marriages and deaths were inaugurated under French rule and used as from 1799. These registers, are today stored in the respective registrar's offices. The Directory of the Palatinate and Rhine-Hessian Church Registers (Verzeichnis der pfälzischen und rheinhessischen Kirchenbücher), which was compiled by the Regional Archives Speyer (see ☎

<https://www.landeshauptarchiv.de/archivnutzung/hilfsmittel/kirchenbuchverzeichnis/>), provides information on the whereabouts of church registers of the former province of Rhine-Hesse.

2.3. Jewish Registers (Holding C 12)

In the Jewish registers (Holding C 12) which were compiled in parallel to the duplicates of the church registers, Jewish ancestors can be searched for. However, in the State Archives Darmstadt, corresponding Jewish registers are available only for a few Jewish parishes. Notwithstanding the aforesaid, Holding C 12 contains references to Jewish registers in the holdings of the Hessian Main State Archives in Wiesbaden, in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem (CAHJP) (see ➔ www.sites.huji.ac.il/cahjp) and in the registrar's offices. Almost all Jewish registers are microfilmed (Q 1 No. 256 – 324) and are thus made available as microfilm only, in order to protect the originals.

2.4. Civil registers starting from 1874

On 1 October 1874 in Prussia, the "Law on the Registration of Marital Status and the Form of the Marriage Ceremony" came into effect, which was adopted shortly after throughout all Germany. These register ledgers are held today in the respective registrar's office or in the Archives for Marital Status Hesse, founded in 2009.

Contact: Personenstandsarchiv Hessen, Leipziger Straße 83, 35279 Neustadt, ☎ +49 (0) 6692 203 880, fax: +49 (0) 6692 203 881 9, email: personenstandsarchiv@stama.hessen.de.

3. Genealogy beyond the church records

3.1. Roadmap of the 19th century

Files of the Magistrate's Courts (Holding Group G 28)

For purposes of research on the period after circa 1820, the files of the magistrate's courts (Holding G 28) should also be consulted. The departments of non-contentious jurisdiction (family law matters, notifications of death, probates) are of particular importance there. The older documents from the period between 1821 and 1900 are arranged according to location. The notifications of death (19th century) contain the name, the exact time of death and often also the date and place of birth of the deceased. They also comprise details about the surviving relatives and about the property of the deceased. The file group about Family law matters (19th century) covers all family matters such as estate and guardianship records, but also in part probate and contracts matters. The files are mostly arranged according to the place of residence of the deceased and, subordinated to that, also according to the first initial of the surname. The documents after 1900 are in part subject to special classification periods and can, for this reason, only be accessed, after a waiver has been applied for and obtained.

Files of the County Offices (Holding Group G 15)

The departments of demographic matters ("Bevölkerungswesen") of the county office holdings should likewise not be ignored for purposes of genealogical research.

3.2. Sources for the period before 1821

The official book holdings (Holding Group C) and other holdings listed according to relevance (Holding Group E) can be consulted for purposes of genealogical research. However, the personal information found there is often inaccurate, so that the person being searched for cannot always be confirmed beyond doubt. Holding Group C contains in particular:

C 2 Salbücher (Urbarium): Urbarium can contain population lists, lists of those subject to paying interest, etc.

C 4 Official Court Books: In the official court books, above all, the legal transactions of private individuals are recorded.

C 6 Fire Regulations Land Registers: The fire regulations land registers, which cover the period from circa 1800 to 1973, list the inhabitants of a borough according to street name.

Holding Group E contains, above all, the holding E 14 B (Taxes and Various Public Revenues) that should be searched, as it contains many tax registers.

4. Sources for specific groups of people

4.1. Military Personnel

Military physical lists, personnel rosters and documents on personal affairs are stored in holding E 8 B (Military and Troop Administration, Staff Affairs).

- ① In 1871, jurisdiction for military affairs passed to the Reich, so that the records are now to be found in the Federal Military Archives in Freiburg. However, the bulk of records was destroyed in Potsdam in 1945.

Contact: Bundesarchiv, Wiesentalstraße 10, 79115 Freiburg, email: militaerarchiv@bundesarchiv.de, ↪ www.bundesarchiv.de.

4.2. Civil servants, clerks and royal household servants

- D 8 Court and Lord Steward's Office
- G15 Counties, Dept. 5 County and Provincial Administration, Dept. 13 School Matters (Teacher Personnel Files)
- G 18 Commission for Community Servers and Widows' Fund
- G 21 B Personnel Affairs
- G 22 Examining Board for the Judiciary and Government
- G 31 LP Railway Personnel
- R 21 C 1 Biographical Card Index A. Eckhardt (only references, no files)
- R 21 C 2 Civil Servant Card Index State Compendia Electorate of Mainz (only references, no files)
- R 21 C 3 Civil Servant Card Index State Compendia Hesse-Darmstadt (only references, no files)
- S 1 Biographical Information (especially on Hessian civil servants, only references, no files)

5. Conclusion

The staff of the State Archives Darmstadt is happy to assist you in locating the relevant holdings and in making you familiar with the sources. Please keep in mind, however, that the bulk of archival materials up to the 1940s is written in old German handwriting (*Sueterlin*) or printed in gothic font, so the user must be able to read both. For practical reasons, our staff cannot offer extended reading assistance to users.

In order to prepare best for a research in the State Archives of Darmstadt, you should inform us about your visit a few days in advance, preferably per email (✉ poststelle@stad.hessen.de). More detailed written enquiries are processed against a fee. The fee depends on the amount of time required to deal with it.

5.1. Literature

For a comprehensive list of literature, please see the German version of this leaflet.

5.2. Internet

- State Archives Darmstadt, Main State Archives in Wiesbaden and State Archives Marburg
↪ <https://landesarchiv.hessen.de/hessian-state-archives>
- Regional Archives Administration Rhineland-Palatinate (Koblenz and Speyer)
↪ www.landeshauptarchiv.de
- Regional Archives Baden-Württemberg ↪ www.landesarchiv-bw.de
- Hessian Association of Family History ↪ <http://www.hfv-ev.de>
- Institute for Biographical History in Bensheim ↪ www.personengeschichte.de
- Genealogical Research in North Rhine-Westphalia ↪ http://www.archive.nrw.de/lav/abteilungen/ostwestfalen_lippe/BilderKartenLogosDateien/Dateien/LAV-Brosch-Genealogie2015.pdf

5.3. Databases

- Archival Information System Hessen ↪ <https://arcinsys.hessen.de>
- Database of the Family History Center operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ↪ <https://familysearch.org>
- Datenbank der rheinland-pfälzischen Archive ↪ www.archivdatenbank.lha-rlp.de
- Database of the Institute for Historical Regional Studies at the University of Mainz e.V. ↪ www.regionalgeschichte.net
- Hessian Regional History Information System of the Hessian Regional Authorities for Historical Regional Studies ↪ www.lagis-hessen.de