



User Instructions for Research on Emigrants

1. Preface

The search for emigrants can prove difficult, as a result of frequently inaccurate information regarding the emigrants' places of origin. Often, only "Hesse", "Hesse, Darmstadt" or "Darmstadt" are denoted as the emigrants' places of origin in the passenger lists and the tax and census registers of their new homeland. This information can apply to any of over 1000 places that once belonged to the Landgraviate Hesse-Darmstadt (1567–1806), the Grand Duchy of Hesse (1806–1918) and the later People's State of Hesse (1919–1945), as well as the former mediatised dominions (*Standesherrschaften*). Even in case "Darmstadt" was mentioned as the place of origin, it was not always the city of Darmstadt that was meant.

2. Legal Regulations for Emigration

Emigration was regulated in the Grand Duchy of Hesse for the first time in 1820. The constitution of the Grand Duchy granted every person in Hesse the right to emigrate. In May 1821, only a few conditions were stipulated for emigration. People intending to emigrate had to notify their intention to the provincial government, which then publicly called upon potential creditors to submit their claims (the so-called *Ediktalladung*). Upon expiry of a three-month period, permission to emigrate was granted.

3. Documents on Emigrants (Holding R 21 B)

The 'Documents on Emigrants' of the State Archives Darmstadt are based first and foremost on card indices compiled before the Second World War by the genealogist Walter Möller, and Father Ernst Wagner. Möller's data were extrapolated from the *Ediktalladungen* published in the newspapers; the source is cited as "Emigrant Card Index Walter Möller". For his card index, Ernst Wagner evaluated church registers and files, some of which were destroyed during the Second World War. He furthermore incorporated information from literature into his card index.

The work of Walter Möller and Father Ernst Wagner was then continued by the archivists Dr Wolfgang Huschke, Ferdinand Koob and Frieder Boss, who evaluated above all the district files on emigrants, which ended up in the archives after the Second World War. The sources cited here are the respective holdings of the State Archives, often with their old file numbers.

There are two possible routes to take when searching the Documents on Emigrants in the database ➔ <https://arcinsys.hessen.de> (→ Staatsarchiv Darmstadt → Holding [R 21 B](#)).

1. If the exact spelling of the first name and the surname is known, enter the "Simple search" menu and type the search words in the given box.
2. If the spelling of the name is known only approximately, please navigate via the alphabet of names on the left side of the screen.

① **Please note:** The Documents on Emigrants ([R 21 B](#)) provide indications of the place of origin and can lead to a successful search. No files are hidden behind the suggestions, however, and indeed no further information beyond that which is already contained in the title.

4. Further Sources

Files on demographics and emigration from before 1821 were collected together in Record Group E 11 (Demographics). Unfortunately, this record group was destroyed in the Second World War. Some of these files were micro-filmed by the Library of Congress in Washington between 1929 and 1932. In 1960, the State Archives Darmstadt received copies of these films, which were then assigned to Record Group Q 1 (User Films) under numbers 1–12. The names of the emigrants reported in these files are listed in the Documents on Emigrants (see 3.).

For places of origin belonging to the former mediatised dominions (*Standesherrschaften*), a few files on emigration exist. Above all, the Holdings F 23 A (Principality of Schlitz, Files), F 24 C (County of Solms-Rödelheim, Local Files) and F 27 A (Principality of Riedesel zu Eisenbach – Complete Archives) should be examined here.

Family archives not held in the State Archives should also be taken into account. For an overview of contact addresses see the database (➔ <https://arcinsys.hessen.de>).

The territorial or administrative affiliation of a place of origin can be ascertained via the

- Historical Inventory of places of the former Grand-Duchy and People's State of Hesse with administrative districts and jurisdictions from 1820 until the transformations in context with the municipal territorial reform ('Historisches Ortsverzeichnis für das Gebiet des ehem. Großherzogtums und Volksstaats Hessen mit Nachweis der Kreis- und Gerichtszugehörigkeit von 1820 bis zu den Veränderungen im Zuge der kommunalen Gebietsreform'), edited by Hans Georg Ruppel, with the assistance of Karin Müller, 1976 (book number of the library of the State Archives Darmstadt: H-B 71/30)

or online via the

- Historical Encyclopaedia of Places in the Regional History Information System of Hesse (LAGIS, ➔ <http://www.lagis-hessen.de/de/subjects/index/sn/ol>).

Files on emigrants from the period **after 1821** are preserved in the existing documents of the districts (Record Group G 15) in the branch "Demographics", section "Emigration". All emigrants who are mentioned in the files of the district administrations are also listed in the Documents on Emigrants.

The files in the section **Non-Contentious Jurisdiction** (Record Group G 28 Local Courts, Branch F) also contain information on emigrants. These holdings have not yet been systematically evaluated; only accidental discoveries are added to the Documents on Emigrants.

The *Archivinformationssystem Arcinsys* is the online research database for the Hessian State Archives. It is publicly accessible on the Internet (➔ <https://arcinsys.hessen.de>).

- ① The extant documents of the municipalities were naturally not evaluated for the Documents on Emigrants, but they should certainly not be disregarded.

5. Information on Literature, Databases and Links

5.1 Literature

For a comprehensive list of literature, please refer to the German-language version of this leaflet.

5.2. Databases

- Card index of emigrants of the Institute for Palatine History and Folklore in Kaiserslautern (➔ www.pfalzgeschichte.de)
- Database of German emigrants of the Historical Museum of Bremerhaven; a fee is charged (➔ <http://www.dad-recherche.de>)
- Database of the Hessian troops in America (➔ <http://www.lagis-hessen.de/en/subjects/index/sn/hetrina>)
- Database of the Institute for Historical Regional Studies at the University of Mainz e. V. (➔ www.auswanderung-rlp.de)
- Emigration database of the Regional Archives Baden-Württemberg (➔ www.auswanderer-bw.de)
- Hessian Genealogical Database at the Hessian Association of Family History (HFV) in Darmstadt. This database is only accessible for members of the HFV (contact: Hessische Familiengeschichtliche Vereinigung, Karolinenplatz 3, 54289 Darmstadt, ➔ www.hfv-ev.de).
- Passenger lists of the State Archives Bremen, Archives of the Chamber of Commerce, compiled in cooperation with the Society for Genealogy e. V. Bremen "The Mouse" (➔ <http://www.passagierlisten.de>)