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Conducting Census Research in Archives in Germany, France, and Poland

Should you be fortunate to have the time and money to invest in a trip to Europe to pursue census records, you have a lot of work to do before you go. Finding a copy of the book *Researching in Germany* would be the best way to start, because it was written with you in mind. In general, you would do well to consider the following points:¹

1. Begin planning your trip at least six months in advance.
2. Write out specific goals for your research.
3. If possible, study the online catalog of any archive that might have the documents you need.
4. Communicate carefully with each archive regarding your research goals.
5. Know the archive's schedule for visitors; many have different hours (or no hours) on different days of the week (and watch out for holidays). Only a very few are open on Saturdays.
6. Make appointments for every research venue (ask for a day or two more than you need).
7. Plan enough time at each venue to study everything you need to see. Moving to the next venue before you are done can be very disappointing. Returning may be impossible.
8. Order all possible files and documents in advance of your visit.
9. Bring a camera or scanning equipment in case you are allowed to copy documents.
10. Have your computer equipment in order (including flash drives and backup hardware).
11. Engage research assistants or translators/interpreters before your arrival. Archivists can generally recommend competent helpers who speak English and read the old German handwriting; the fee should be negotiated in advance.
12. You will almost always be allowed to make copies, but never do so by camera or hand scanner without specific permission. If archive personnel

make the copies, you may need to exercise great patience. Filling out copy requests takes time. The copies will usually be made after you leave and will be mailed or emailed to you with an invoice several weeks later.

13. Send thank-you cards to anybody who helped you significantly.

Of course, this list deals only with things you should consider that regard archives. There are many more aspects of the trip that must be carefully addressed, such as air and ground travel, lodging, and meals. If planned well, such a trip can be the adventure of a lifetime for a family history researcher.

Notes

- ¹ Roger P. Minert et al., *Researching in Germany*, 2nd ed. (Provo, UT: Picton Press, 2013).

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The States of Germany in 1871

German

English

Anhalt	Anhalt
Baden	Baden
Bayern	Bavaria
Brandenburg	Brandenburg
Braunschweig	Brunswick
Bremen [Hansestadt Bremen]	Bremen
Elsaß-Lothringen	Alsace-Lorraine
Hamburg [Hansestadt Hamburg]	Hamburg
Hannover	Hanover
Hessen [Hessen-Darmstadt]	Hesse [Hesse-Darmstadt]
Hessen-Nassau	Hesse-Nassau
Hohenzollern	Hohenzollern
Lippe [Lippe-Detmold]	Lippe [Lippe-Detmold]
Lübeck [Hansestadt Lübeck]	Luebeck
Mecklenburg-Schwerin	Mecklenburg-Schwerin
Mecklenburg-Strelitz	Mecklenburg-Strelitz
Oldenburg	Oldenburg
Ostpreußen	East Prussia
Pommern	Pomerania
Posen	Posen
Preußen*	Prussia
Reuß ältere Linie [Reuß-Greiz]	Reuss Elder Line [Reuss-Greiz]
Reuß jüngere Linie [Reuß-Schleiz]	Reuss Younger Line [Reuss-Schleiz]
Rheinprovinz [Rheinland]	Rhineland
Sachsen-Altenburg	Saxe-Altenburg
Sachsen-Coburg-Gotha	Saxe-Coburg-Gotha
Sachsen Königreich	Kingdom of Saxony
Sachsen-Meiningen	Saxe-Meiningen
Sachsen Provinz	Province of Saxony
Sachsen-Weimar-Eisenach	Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach
Schaumburg-Lippe	Schaumburg-Lippe
Schlesien	Silesia
Schleswig-Holstein	Schleswig-Holstein
Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt	Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt
Schwarzburg-Sondershausen	Schwarzburg-Sondershausen
Waldeck	Waldeck
Westfalen	Westphalia
Westpreußen	West Prussia
Württemberg	Wuerttemberg

*Not treated in this book as a state (it was a kingdom consisting of thirteen provinces)