Finding Ancestors and Houses in Franconia

Parish Registers, Archives, Cadastral Records, and House History

A free guide by OpenCRAM · opencram.org
Edited by Christian Reichel
English edition · as of Nov 2, 2026

Finding Ancestors and Houses in Franconia – Parish Registers, Archives, Cadastral Records, and House History

Published by OpenCRAM (https://opencram.org). Editor and person responsible for the content (§ 18(2) MStV): Christian Reichel; name and address in the legal notice, https://opencram.org/en/legal-notice.html (German: https://opencram.org/impressum.html).

Translation. This English version is a translation of the German original by OpenCRAM, prepared with AI assistance; Christian Reichel is responsible for its content. In case of doubt, the German original applies.

How this guide was made. First drafts were written by an AI language model; factual statements were checked against the cited sources by separate, also AI-assisted review roles. The editor reviewed the texts and bears editorial responsibility. Corrections are welcome: ahnen@opencram.org.

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PDF edition built on November 13, 2026 from the English web edition (content as of Nov 2, 2026).

Original German edition: https://opencram.org/akademie/franken/.

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Foreword

It all started when my grandparents died. Suddenly there was no one left I could ask about the old days. So I started searching myself.
Later a second trail was added: an old house. Anyone who buys or inherits a house wonders at some point who used to live there. For me it was an old coin that I found in the house. A small find – but I couldn't stop thinking about it. Who lost it? Who lived here, worked here, raised children here?
[Photo: see the online edition, https://opencram.org/en/academy/franconia/preface.html]
Along the way I learned that a house is one of the best guides to people. Through the house number you find not only the owners but also tenants, maids, grandparents living in retirement on the farm (im Austrag), and the neighbors. That is why this guide has two equally important parts: one about the people and one about the houses and farmsteads they lived in.
Over time I also learned to read an old house myself – much as you can read a tree's history in its narrow and wide growth rings. There is an old beam with strange notches that evidently came from another building and was given a second life here. There are blackened stones and beams that reveal where a large hearth with a smoke chamber (schwarze Kammer) once stood. There are small rectangular windows that don't quite fit the rounded lintels and the much larger openings. And sometimes an old window even turns up behind a wall, one that has long since stopped being visible from the street. If you know what to look for, you find a house's history not only in archives but also in its walls.
The first big hurdle came quickly: old handwriting. Nothing cost me as much time in the beginning as entries I could barely decipher. The second: patience. A purchase contract is not a construction date, and a construction date that appears somewhere in the records often doesn't deliver what it promises. More than once I had to strike an assumption. That's part of it –

what matters is to document every statement and to correct mistakes openly. And the further back you go, the harder it gets: before 1800 the traces lie in many different archives, and the books are harder to read. If that's how you feel right now – you're in good company.

I made progress above all thanks to free resources: libraries and archives that put their holdings online free of charge, and software that is freely available. I have benefited a great deal from them. That is why the core text of this guide is freely accessible. I want to give something back to the community.

I owe just as much to the people in offices and archives who patiently answered my questions – if you ask well, you often get more help than you expect. And to the many volunteers: the helpers in parishes, the societies, and all the volunteers who transcribe parish registers (Kirchenbücher), compile house books (Häuserbücher), or create local family books (Ortsfamilienbücher). Without their work, many finds would not exist. My heartfelt thanks to all of them.

In the past year, artificial intelligence has made a big leap. That is leading to breakthroughs everywhere – including in family and house history research. AI helps me, for example, with reading old handwriting, and it also worked on this guide (see the preliminary note). One rule applies without exception: every fact is checked against the original. The AI makes suggestions; the responsibility remains with me.

This guide tells neither the story of my family nor that of my house. It shows the paths I have taken. Where I can contribute something from my own experience, you will find a box "From experience (Aus der Praxis)". In the part about houses and farmsteads, the boxes "Typical case (Typischer Fall)" show general patterns; their figures and details are entirely made up and do not describe any particular house.

I hope that you get a little further with your family tree – and perhaps with the history of your house. And perhaps you will manage to inspire others to take up this work.

My most important advice fits into one sentence: Keep at it, and don't give up.

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Preliminary Note and Legal Notices

Free and non-commercial. A free, non-commercial offering by a private individual – no advertising, no sales, no paid recommendations.
This guide is meant to make it easier for you to find your way to your Franconian ancestors – and to the history of the houses and farmsteads they lived in. So that you know what you can expect, here are a few notes up front.
Personal view, not advice. This guide reflects the personal view and experiences of a hobby researcher: an account of experience and a source of orientation, not a set of instructions. It does not replace legal, tax, or any other advice and does not provide legal services. Where the guide explains laws, closure periods (Schutzfristen), or fees, this is for general orientation; no individual case is examined. For specific questions, for example about an inheritance or a denied request to inspect records, contact the responsible office or an attorney. What you make of the suggestions is your own decision and responsibility.
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How this guide came about. First rough drafts of the chapters were produced by an AI language model (Claude by Anthropic). The factual statements were checked against the cited sources by separate, likewise AI-assisted review roles; some statements rely on secondary sources. The publisher reviewed the foreword in detail and the remaining texts in overview, and is responsible for the selection and assessments; the foreword and the "From experience (Aus der Praxis)" boxes are based on his own experience in family research. The "Typical case (Typischer Fall)" boxes were written by the AI from general patterns. The photo in the foreword was taken by the publisher; it was composited with an AI tool. Editorial responsibility lies with Christian Reichel. More about this under License (https://opencram.org/en/academy/franconia/license.html#ki).

Who is behind OpenCRAM? A private family researcher. He publishes this guide as a non-commercial project and is responsible for its content; his name and address are given in the Impressum (legal notice) (https://opencram.org/en/legal-notice.html). Questions and tips reach him at ahnen@opencram.org.

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Protecting living people. The EU General Data Protection Regulation (Datenschutz-Grundverordnung, GDPR) does not apply to deceased persons; the archives' closure periods and the feelings of relatives nevertheless deserve consideration. Information about living people, such as dates of birth, addresses, or photos, on the other hand, is protected. Before you publish or share your family tree, leave out living people or ask them for permission.

Researching houses – consideration for today's owners. Anyone researching the history of a house touches on the rights of the people who live in it today. As a rule, you can inspect the land register (Grundbuch) and building files (Bauakten) of someone else's house only with a letter of authorization (Vollmacht) from the owners; you enter properties only with permission, and you photograph houses only from the street. The "Typical case (Typischer Fall)" boxes describe general patterns; their figures and details are made up. The legal information refers to Bavaria (law as of November 2026).

Feedback. Have you found a mistake or outdated information? Write to ahnen@opencram.org. Individual case consultations are, however, not possible through this channel.

Part I · Finding People

Chapter 1

What Is Where? A Guide to Franconia's Sources

If you are searching for your ancestors in Franconia, you need two pieces of information to begin with: a date and a religious denomination. The date is January 1, 1876 – since then, civil registry offices (Standesämter) in Bavaria, too, have kept the registers of births, marriages, and deaths. (F79, F80) Everything before that is recorded in the parish registers (Kirchenbücher). And which parish register that is depends, more in Franconia than elsewhere, on whether a place was Catholic or Lutheran (evangelisch). Two neighboring villages can have their books in different archives and on different online portals. This chapter shows you what is kept where.

1.1 The golden rule: first the time, then the place – and the faith

For every person you are looking for, first ask yourself: **When** did the event take place? Before 1876 you search in the parish register; from 1876 on, at the civil registry office or in the archive that has taken over its old registers. (F80, F26)

Next comes the **place** – meaning the place as it was then. Many villages now belong to larger municipalities; the 1972 territorial reform (Gebietsreform) reduced the number of Bavarian counties (Landkreise) from 143 to 71, and by 1978 the number of municipalities had shrunk from over 7,000 to just over 2,000. (F62) A village that is now just a district of a larger municipality (Ortsteil) may have had its own parish – or it may have belonged to a parish in the neighboring village.

The third question is especially important in Franconia: **Which denomination** did the place have? The answer decides whether you search with the Lutheran regional church (Landeskirche) or with a Catholic diocese.

Box: Which Franconia? By "Franconia" (Franken) this guide means the three Bavarian administrative districts (Regierungsbezirke) of Upper Franconia (Oberfranken), Middle Franconia (Mittelfranken), and Lower Franconia (Unterfranken). Before 1800 the map looked very different: the Franconian Imperial Circle (Fränkischer Reichskreis) included, among others, the ecclesiastical prince-bishoprics (Hochstifte) of Bamberg, Würzburg, and Eichstätt, the margraviates (Markgraftümer) of Ansbach and Kulmbach-Bayreuth, the Imperial City (Reichsstadt) of Nuremberg and other Imperial Cities such as Rothenburg, Weißenburg, or Windsheim, as well as counts and lords. (F73, F76) In between lay the territories of the Imperial Knights (Reichsritter), who formed their own knightly circles (Ritterkreise). (F73) Between 1802/03 and 1810, most of Upper and Middle Franconia came to Bavaria – Ansbach and Nuremberg in 1806, Bayreuth in 1810. Würzburg was a separate grand duchy (Großherzogtum) from 1806 and, like Aschaffenburg, did not become definitively Bavarian until 1814. (F74, F75, F76, F77, F78) One exception is the **Coburger Land (Coburg region)**: until 1918 it belonged to the Duchy of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha (Herzogtum Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha), then briefly to the Free State of Coburg (Freistaat Coburg), and came to Bavaria on July 1, 1920. (F35) For Lutheran places in the Coburg region there is therefore a separate gazetteer (Ortsverzeichnis). (F3)

Box: Catholic or Lutheran? As a rule of thumb, the territories of the prince-bishoprics of Bamberg, Würzburg, and Eichstätt were Catholic, while the margraviates of Ansbach and Kulmbach-Bayreuth and many Imperial Cities – above all Nuremberg – were Lutheran. (F73, F83) Some Imperial Knights also supported the Reformation; that is why there are Lutheran villages in the middle of Catholic surroundings. (F73) What this means for you: check for each place individually which parish it belonged to. The neighboring village may have a different denomination – and thus have its parish registers in a different archive and on a different portal. For couples of different denominations, it pays to look in the books of both churches.

1.2 From 1876: the civil registry offices

Since January 1, 1876, civil registry offices in Bavaria have recorded births, marriages, and deaths. (F25) The registers stay with the civil registry office for a certain time: birth registers 110 years, marriage registers 80 years, death registers 30 years. (F26) After that, the civil registry office offers them to the responsible public archive – usually the archive of the city or municipality. (F27, F80)

As long as a register is held by the civil registry office, you receive a certificate (Urkunde) or information if you yourself are recorded in it, if it concerns your spouse, or if it concerns ancestors and descendants in the direct line. Other persons must credibly demonstrate a legal interest (rechtliches Interesse); for siblings, a legitimate interest (berechtigtes Interesse) is sufficient for the birth and death registers. If the last of the persons concerned to die has been dead for 30 years, a legitimate interest is likewise sufficient. (F28) Family research alone is generally not considered a legal interest. Where a legitimate interest is sufficient (siblings, 30 years after death), the civil registry office decides in each individual case whether it accepts family research (more in section 3.4). A birth certificate in Bavaria usually costs €12 (as of November 2026). (F31)

If a register is already in the archive, the archive no longer issues certificates, but copies, certified copies, or extracts. (F29, F30) Each city sets its own fees, and the differences are large. The Stadtarchiv Nürnberg (Nuremberg City Archives), for example, charges €35 per requested entry, even if nothing is found (as of November 2026). (F163) You will find more examples and details in section 3.6. Ask about the costs beforehand.

1.3 Before 1876: the parish registers

Lutheran: the Landeskirchliches Archiv in Nuremberg

The parish registers of the Evangelical Lutheran parishes in Bavaria are collected by the **Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern (archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria)** in Nuremberg (Veilhofstraße 8). It holds books or digitized images

(Digitalisate) of just under 1,250 parishes (as of September 2026). (F3)
Whether the books stay in Nuremberg after scanning or go back to the congregation is decided by the congregation. (F6)
The archive only makes a book available once it has been handed over and certain periods have expired: 110 years for baptism books, 80 years for marriage and confirmation (Konfirmation) books, 30 years for burial books. For viewing in the reading room, the periods count from the last entry in the book; for written information, from the date of the individual entry (section 3.5). (F3, F194) You request more recent entries from the parish office (Pfarramt).
In the reading room you do not see originals, but digitized images on screen. Advance registration is not required but is recommended; it is best to order card indexes and books in advance by email. For private family research, one day costs €10; taking your own photos for private use is permitted after signing a form (as of November 2026). (F3, F4) The archive does not answer family research questions by phone, only in writing. (F5)

Online: Archion

The digitized images of the Bavarian regional church are gradually appearing on the **Archion** portal; all holdings are to be digitized by 2030. (F3, F6) Archion charges a fee; **check for free before buying** whether the books of your parish are already online. Prices and details are in section 2.3. (F7, F8)

Catholic: three dioceses and a free portal

Catholic parish registers are called **Matrikeln**. In Franconia they are held by three dioceses, and all three show their older books free of charge on the **Matricula** portal:

- **Archdiocese of Bamberg (Erzbistum Bamberg)** (large parts of Upper and Middle Franconia, plus small parts of Lower Franconia and the Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz); F210): The archdiocesan archives hold around 2,400 volumes; many go back to the time of the Thirty Years' War, some to the 16th century. The books up to 1875 have been freely available online since 2022. (F9, F12) In the reading room

in Bamberg you can view the digitized images for €7 a day; it is usually open Monday through Wednesday, and registration is required (as of November 2026). The archive does not carry out private family research. (F10, F11)

- **Diocese of Würzburg (Bistum Würzburg)** (Lower Franconia; F211): Around 6,000 to 6,600 volumes from about 550 parishes, the oldest from the 16th century. Since December 2024 they have been added to Matricula in alphabetical order; as of October 20, 2026 (checked on November 2, 2026), the parishes from Aidhausen to „Sandberg" as well as Schweinfurt and Würzburg were online; the rest of the roughly 6,000 books are to follow by the end of 2026. (F13, F14) Baptisms are protected for 120 years, marriages and deaths for 100 years. (F13) The reading room in Würzburg (Domerschulstraße 17) is open Monday through Thursday without registration; fees apply for private research (as of November 2026). (F13, F15)
- **Diocese of Eichstätt (Bistum Eichstätt)** (parts of Middle Franconia, plus parts of Upper Bavaria (Oberbayern), the Upper Palatinate, and Swabia (Schwaben); F212): Also on Matricula since the end of 2021. (F16, F17) Ask the Diözesanarchiv Eichstätt (Diocesan Archives of Eichstätt) about conditions of use, the reading room, and fees (Luitpoldstraße 1, 85072 Eichstätt, archiv@bistum-eichstaett.de; as of November 2026). (F17)

On the edges of Franconia, two more dioceses come into play: Catholic parishes in the southwest of Middle Franconia, between Nördlingen, Dinkelsbühl, and Feuchtwangen, belong to the **Diocese of Augsburg (Bistum Augsburg)**; parishes in the Fichtelgebirge (Fichtel Mountains) – such as Marktredwitz, Wunsiedel, Selb, and Arzberg – belong to the **Diocese of Regensburg (Bistum Regensburg)**. Both are also on Matricula. (F18, F19, F213)

Two tips for working with Matricula: For Bamberg, the books end in 1875 – after that, the civil registry office is responsible; for other dioceses the cutoff depends on their closure periods (Schutzfristen). (F12, F13) And not every book is labeled by baptisms, marriages, and deaths – in Würzburg, for example, you sometimes have to browse by date. (F14)

When a parish register is missing

For many Catholic and Lutheran parishes there are **duplicate registers (Zweitschriften)** – copies that the pastors had to make for the state: occasionally as early as 1803, regularly from about 1825/1830 to 1875. Where they have survived, they are usually in the state archives (Staatsarchiv), in some cities (such as Nuremberg, Schwabach, Rothenburg) in the city archives (Stadtarchiv). (F79, F80, F81, F82) If a parish register has burned or gone missing, it is therefore worth asking the responsible state archives (section 1.5).

> **Box: Jewish ancestors in Franconia** Many Jewish families lived in Franconia, often in small rural communities. An important source is the **Judenmatrikel (Jewish registration lists)**, which were created after the Bavarian Edict on the Jews (Judenedikt) of 1813: they list the Jewish population with occupation and the family names fixed at that time. The originals for Middle Franconia are in the Staatsarchiv Nürnberg (Nuremberg State Archives); for 1813 to 1861 the state archives and the Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken (Society for Family Research in Franconia) published an edition in 2003, which is available online from the Staatliche Archive Bayerns (State Archives of Bavaria). (F20) Registers of individual Jewish communities – 16 places, mostly in Lower Franconia – can also be found on Archion under the Landeskirchliches Archiv. (F21) For Upper and Lower Franconia, ask the responsible state archives (Bamberg or Kitzingen, respectively). Registers may be found there in the files of the regional governments of the time – one example from Lower Franconia is a file on the Jews in the Landgericht (older Bavarian district court and administrative office) Brückenau (1817–1832), which contains a Judenmatrikel. (F214)

1.4 City and municipal archives

The city archives hold not only the old civil registry records (section 1.2), but often also residence registration and burgher records (Melde- und Bürgerunterlagen), address books, and files of the city administration. Nuremberg, for example, has address books from 1792 to 2002, with gaps. (F82) Smaller municipalities often have no archive of their own with staff. In every county,

however, there are volunteer **archive curators (Archivpfleger)** who advise the municipalities; they work together with the state archives of the administrative district. (F44, F45) If you don't know where a municipality's records are kept, ask at the town hall (Rathaus) – or at the responsible state archives.

1.5 The state archives

There is a state archive (Staatsarchiv) for each Franconian administrative district (F32):

Staatsarchiv	Responsible for	Good to know (as of November 2026)
Bamberg	Upper Franconia except Coburg	Reading room Mon–Fri; advance registration strongly recommended; own photos without flash at designated spots (F33, F34)
Coburg	City and county of Coburg	Advance registration requested (few seats); personnel files of state officials from 1858 partly in Gotha (Thuringia) (F35)
Nürnberg	Middle Franconia	Building under renovation until probably 2030; viewing only by appointment at four alternative locations: Außenstelle Lichtenau (Lichtenau branch) near Ansbach, Landeskirchliches Archiv in Nuremberg, Staatsarchive Augsburg and Landshut; some holdings temporarily closed (F36, F88, F195)
Kitzingen (formerly Würzburg)	Lower Franconia	Moved from Würzburg to Kitzingen in 2026; use in trial operation only with advance registration; ask beforehand whether written inquiries are possible again (F37, F38, F53)

What do family researchers find there? For example, **contract registers (Briefprotokolle)** (contracts concerning house, farm, and inheritance, mostly from about 1700, replaced from 1862 by notarial records (Notariatsurkunden)), the **land-tax cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster)** from 1808,

files on **permission to settle and marriage (Ansässigmachung und Heirat)** from 1825, domicile files (Heimatakten), **probate and guardianship files (Nachlass- und Vormundschaftsakten)** of the local courts (Amtsgerichte), emigration files, and military conscription lists. (F25, F79, F33, F36)
What it costs: For demonstrably family-history purposes, the State Archives of Bavaria charge no usage fees; you pay for copies, scans, and postage. (F42, F39) Copies cost, for example, €0.60 per A4 page in Bamberg (as of November 2026). (F34) Short written information is also usually free of charge for demonstrably family-history purposes; the archives do not carry out extensive research – ask beforehand. (F41, F42, F79, F150)
Closure periods (Schutzfristen): In Bavaria, files about persons are protected until 10 years after death; if the year of death is unknown, until 100 years after birth, and if that is unknown too, until 60 years after the file was created. Under certain conditions the period can be shortened on application. (F43)
Prepare online: Since July 2026 there has been a **protected virtual reading room (geschützter virtueller Lesesaal)** – one account for all State Archives of Bavaria, with which you can search finding aids (Findmittel) and order files. (F39) More on this in Chapter 2.

> **Box: Soldiers in World War I** Until 1919, Bavaria had its own army. Its records, including the **Kriegsstammrollen (wartime military service rolls)** of World War I, are in the Kriegsarchiv (War Archives) of the Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (Bavarian Main State Archives) in Munich. (F25, F79, F46) The service rolls are available as digitized images on the fee-based portal Ancestry. (F46, F47)

1.6 The libraries: address books, newspapers, maps

- **bavarikon**, the cultural portal of the Free State of Bavaria, brings together digital collections of Bavarian institutions; the content of the former Bayerische Landesbibliothek Online is gradually being transferred there. (F54, F55)
- **digiPress**, the newspaper portal of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library), contains millions of newspaper pages from

the 17th century to about the 1920s, full-text searchable – good for death notices and official announcements. (F56, F57)

- **Historical maps**: The original survey (Uraufnahme), which Bavaria surveyed between 1808 and 1864 for the land-tax cadastre, shows villages with every house; you can view extracts free of charge in the BayernAtlas and generate them as PDFs. (F58)

The Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken (Society for Family Research in Franconia) and other online resources are presented in Chapter 2.

1.7 Your guide at a glance

You are looking for ...	Period	Where first?
Birth, marriage, death	from 1876	Civil registry office (birth up to 110, marriage up to 80, death up to 30 years), then city or municipal archives
Baptism, marriage, burial – Lutheran	before 1876	Archion; Landeskirchliches Archiv in Nuremberg; more recent books at the parish office
Baptism, marriage, burial – Catholic	before 1876	Matricula; archives of the Archdiocese of Bamberg or the Dioceses of Würzburg and Eichstätt
Substitute for missing parish registers	about 1825–1875	Duplicate registers (Zweitschriften) in the state archives, sometimes city archives
House, farm, inheritance, marriage permit	from about 1700 (marriage files from 1825)	State archives of the administrative district
Soldiers 1914–1918	1914–1918	Kriegsarchiv München / Ancestry
Death notices, addresses	19th/20th c.	digiPress, bavarikon, city archives

Sources for Chapter 1

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless otherwise stated.

- F3 LAELKB, „Kirchenbücher", https://www.archiv-elkb.de/unsere-bestaende/kirchenbuecher – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: parish registers/digitized images of almost 1,250 parishes (as of 09/2026); reading room digitized images only, no originals; periods baptism 110, marriage/confirmation 80, burial 30 years from last entry; information only after expiry of period and handover; digitization by 2030, delivery to Archion mostly monthly; Coburg not Bavarian in 19th c., separate gazetteer
- F4 LAELKB, „Benutzung", https://www.archiv-elkb.de/benutzung – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: advance registration recommended; advance ordering by email; private family research €10/day; own photos for private use after form; inquiries in writing to archiv@elkb.de
- F5 LAELKB, „Kontakt", https://www.archiv-elkb.de/kontakt – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Veilhofstraße 8, 90489 Nürnberg; family research not by phone, only form/e-mail
- F6 Archion, archive page LAELKB, https://www.archion.de/de/alle-archive/bayern/landeskirchliches-archiv-der-evangelisch-lutherischen-kirche-in-bayern – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: arranged by 62 deaneries (Dekanate); parish decides where the books remain; funding 2019–2030
- F7 Archion, „Zugang kaufen", https://www.archion.de/de/zugang-kaufen – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: 1 month €19.90 (50 downloads), 3 months €52.20, 1 year €178.80; no automatic renewal
- F8 Archion, help page „Subscription & Passes", https://www.archion.de/en/help-contact/subscription-passes – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: images only with a pass; unlimited viewing
- F9 Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg, „Pfarrmatrikel", https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/bestaende/matrikel/pfarrmatrikel1/Uebersicht/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: around 2,400 volumes; many back to Thirty Years' War, some 16th c.; since Pentecost 2022 books before 1875/76 freely on Matricula
- F10 AEB, „Familienforschung", https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/Familienforschung/ – accessed November 2, 2026

Supports: digitized images in reading room €7/day; no commissioned research for private individuals

- F11 AEB, „Öffnungszeiten“, https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/archivnutzung/Oeffnungszeiten/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Regensburger Ring 2, Bamberg; usually Mon–Wed 8 a.m.–4 p.m.; registration required
- F12 Matricula, Bamberg, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/bamberg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: holdings up to 1875, from 1876 civil registry offices
- F13 ABBW, „Familienforschung“, https://abbw.bistum-wuerzburg.de/archiv/familienforschung/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: around 6,000–6,600 volumes, approx. 550 parishes; periods baptism 120, marriage/death 100 years; fees for private research
- F14 Matricula, Würzburg, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/wuerzburg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: online alphabetically since December 10, 2024; update 20.10.2026: up to „Sandberg“ plus Schweinfurt/Würzburg, approx. 4,400 volumes; pages not labeled by entry type
- F15 ABBW, home page, https://abbw.bistum-wuerzburg.de/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Domerschulstr. 17, Würzburg; Mon–Thu 9 a.m.–4 p.m., closed Fri; no registration
- F16 CompGen, news item 17.12.2021, https://www.compgen.de/?p=42952 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Eichstätt on Matricula since December 15, 2021 (secondhand, as of 2021)
- F17 Matricula, Eichstätt, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/eichstaett/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Diözesanarchiv Eichstätt, contact
- F18 CompGen, news item 2020, https://www.compgen.de/?p=23955 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Diocese of Augsburg on Matricula, including parishes around Dinkelsbühl/Feuchtwangen; images from 1960s microfilms
- F19 CompGen, news item 2023, https://www.compgen.de/?p=58934 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Diocese of Regensburg on Matricula since May 24, 2023
- F20 GDA, Judenmatrikel Mittelfranken, preface, https://www.gda.bayern.de/publikationen/judenmatrikel/preface – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Judenmatrikel after the edict of 1813; Middle Franconia originals in Staatsarchiv Nürnberg; edition 2003 (Staatsarchiv Nürnberg + GFF)

- F21 Archion, LAELKB „Juden", https://www.archion.de/de/alle-archive/bayern/landeskirchliches-archiv-der-evangelisch-lutherischen-kirche-in-bayern/juden – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: section with registers of Jewish communities (16 places)
- F25 J. Wild, „Anleitung zur Familienforschung in Bayern" [Guide to family research in Bavaria], GDA, as of 05/2001, https://www.gda.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Medien_fuer_Ausbildung_Qualifizierung/famfor.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: civil registry offices in Bavaria from January 1, 1876; duplicate parish registers occasionally from 1803, regularly approx. 1825–1875, mostly state archives; record types (Briefprotokolle, Grundsteuerkataster from 1808, permission to settle/marry from 1825, Heimatakten, conscription); Kriegsarchiv
- F26 § 5 PStG, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pstg/__5.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: retention period (Fortführung) birth 110, marriage 80, death 30 years
- F27 § 7 PStG, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pstg/__7.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: after expiry, offered to responsible archives
- F28 § 62 PStG, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pstg/__62.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: entitled persons: persons concerned, spouses, ancestors/descendants; otherwise legal interest; legitimate interest sufficient if last person concerned dead for 30 years
- F29 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, Auskunft Personenstandsregister, https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/service_auskunft_personenstandsregister.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: after expiry no certificates, but extracts; €35 per case/register extract
- F30 Stadtarchiv Bayreuth, Hinweise Personenstandsunterlagen, https://www.bayreuth.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Hinweise-zu-Personenstandsunterlagen-im-Stadtarchiv-Bayreuth.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: archive no longer issues certificates (§ 55 PStG)
- F31 BayernPortal, „Geburtsurkunde; Beantragung", https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/leistung/06245831941 80 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: €12.00 per certificate (page as of August 5, 2026)
- F32 § 3 ArchivGlV, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivGl-3 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: responsibilities: Bamberg (Upper Franconia except Coburg), Coburg, Nuremberg (Middle Franconia), Kitzingen (Lower Franconia)
- F33 GDA, „State Archive Bamberg", https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/archives/state-archive-bamberg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: holdings (Hochstift, Margraviate of Bayreuth, knightly cantons Gebirg/Steigerwald, Amtsgerichte probate/guardianship); Hainstraße 39; advance registration recommended

- F34 GDA, information sheet reading room Bamberg 01/2026, https://www.gda.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Informationsblatt_Lesesaal_202601.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: opening hours; own photos at designated spots after declaration, without flash; copy A4 €0.60
- F35 GDA, „State Archive Coburg“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/archives/state-archive-coburg – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Coburg not Bavarian until 1920; emigrant indexes; part of the personnel files in Gotha; advance registration required
- F36 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Nürnberg“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: renovation until probably 2030; viewing only by appointment at alternative locations (Lichtenau, Augsburg, Landshut, LAELKB in Nuremberg); notarial records from 1862
- F37 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Kitzingen“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-kitzingen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: formerly Staatsarchiv Würzburg; since 02/2026 Deuster-Park 1, Kitzingen; use after advance registration
- F38 GDA, press release 21.07.2026, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/ueber-uns/pm-kitz-21.7.-versand22.7.2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: move completed, reading room up to 30 seats
- F39 GDA, leaflet „Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/aktuelles/faltblatt-gvl-22.7.2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: GVL since July 22, 2026, one account for all state archives; family research free of charge except for reproductions
- F41 § 12 ArchivBO, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivBO-12 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: time-based fees per half hour €15–29; reproductions at customary local prices
- F42 § 13 ArchivBO, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivBO-13 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: no fee for demonstrably family-history purposes
- F43 Art. 10 BayArchivG, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivG-10 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: closure period 30 years; personal data 10 years after death, otherwise 100 years after birth, otherwise 60 years after creation; shortening on application
- F44 Art. 5 BayArchivG, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivG-5 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: volunteer archive curators (Archivpfleger)
- F45 GDA, „Die Organisation der kommunalen Archivpflege“, https://gda.bayern.de/fachinformationen/archivpflege/die-organisation-der-kommunalen-archivpflege – accessed November 2, 2026

Supports: archive curators per county, professionally supervised by the state archives

- F46 GDA, „Im Krieg", https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/vermitteln/schulen-entdecken-archive/quellenbeispiele-aus-verschiedenen-historischen-epochen/im-krieg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Kriegsstammrollen approx. 23,000 volumes / 1.4 million entries; digitized images fee-based on Ancestry
- F47 Ancestry, collection 1631, https://www.ancestry.de/search/collections/1631/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: „Kriegsranglisten und -stammrollen des Königreichs Bayern, 1. Weltkrieg" [War rank lists and service rolls of the Kingdom of Bavaria, World War I]; source BayHStA Abt. IV
- F53 BayernPortal, „Staatsarchiv Kitzingen", https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/behoerde/43331630367 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: written genealogical inquiries temporarily not possible (during move) – ask for current status
- F54 BayernPortal, service „bavarikon", https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/leistung/717075058777 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: bavarikon = portal of the Free State for art, culture, regional studies; operated by BSB
- F55 CompGen, „Von der Bayerischen Landesbibliothek Online nach bavarikon", 07.03.2025, https://www.compgen.de/?p=70171 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: BLO being transferred to bavarikon, no longer accessible since 07/2025
- F56 idw, press release BSB 28.10.2021, https://idw-online.de/de/news778345 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: digiPress: approx. 8.2 million newspaper pages, 17th c. to mostly 1920s, full text
- F57 digiPress, https://digitale-sammlungen.de/en/c/fb7c9e2a-acca-496d-9752-cd6c1a2b9f6c – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: full-text search across all titles, calendar view; reproductions fee-based
- F58 LDBV, leaflet „Historische Karten", https://www.ldbv.bayern.de/mam/ldbv/dateien/faltblatt_historischekarten.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Uraufnahme 1808–1864 for the Grundsteuerkataster, approx. 23,000 sheets, village sheets 1:2,500; position sheets 1:25,000; PDF extracts in BayernAtlas free of charge
- F62 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, press release Gebietsreform 19.09.2022, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/ueber-uns/2022-9-sept-20-hsta-pm_gebietsreform_versand.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: 1.7.1972 counties 143 → 71; municipal territorial reform until May 1, 1978, municipalities 7,073 → 2,052
- F73 Haus der Bayerischen Geschichte, Politische Geschichte Bayerns, Kap. 4 (Reformation/Gegenreformation) [Political History of Bavaria, ch. 4: Reformation/Counter-

Reformation], https://archiv.hdbg.de/polges/pages/druck/kapitel4.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
Supports: Franconian Imperial Circle (margraves of Ansbach/Kulmbach, Würzburg, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Eichstätt, Imperial Cities, counts and lords); Reformation spreading from Nuremberg; ecclesiastical principalities mostly Catholic; Imperial Knights own knightly circles, partly Lutheran

- F74 GDA, holdings „Fürstentum Brandenburg-Kulmbach-Bayreuth“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/archive/staatsarchiv-bamberg/bestaende/altbestaende/fuerstentum-brandenburg-kulmbach-bayreuth – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: to Bavaria in 1810
- F75 GDA, holdings „Fürstentum Brandenburg-Ansbach“, https://gda.bayern.de/archive/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/bestaende/altbestaende/fuerstentum-brandenburg-ansbach – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: to Bavaria in 1806
- F76 GDA, „Nuremberg State Archives“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/archives/nuremberg-state-archives – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Imperial City of Nuremberg to Bavaria in 1806; holdings Imperial Cities Rothenburg, Weißenburg, Windsheim
- F77 Regierung von Unterfranken, chronology (as of 01/2019), https://www.regierung.unterfranken.bayern.de/mam/regierungsbezirk/chronologie_zur_geschichte_der_regierung_von_unterfranken_stand_januar_2019.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Würzburg Bavarian 1803, grand duchy 1806, definitively Bavarian 1814; Aschaffenburg 1814
- F78 GDA, holdings „Hochstift und Domkapitel Eichstätt“, https://gda.bayern.de/archive/nuernberg/bestaende/altbestaende/hochstift-und-domkapitel-eichstaett-sowie-eichstaettische-kloester – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: transfer 1803/06
- F79 J. Wild/H. Hien, „Guidelines for genealogical research in Bavaria“, GDA, as of 06/2013, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/typo3/_migrated/content_uploads/genealogic_research_bavaria.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: civil registry offices from January 1, 1876; duplicate parish registers 1803/1825–1876, where preserved in the state archives; own research free of charge; Bavarian army until 1919
- F80 Erzbistum München und Freising, „Familienforschung: Fundorte und Anlaufstellen“, https://www.erzbistum-muenchen.de/kunst-und-kultur/archiv-und-bibliothek/familienforschung/familienforschung-fundorte-und-anlaufstellen – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: civil registry offices since January 1, 1876; historical registers in the municipal archives; duplicate registers 1802–1875 at the state archives
- F81 GFF, „Quellen“, https://www.gf-franken.de/de/quellen.html – accessed November 2, 2026

Supports: duplicate registers in Franconia approx. 1830–1875, state archives, some city archives (Schwabach, Rothenburg)

- F82 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „Familienforschung", https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/service_auskunft_familienforschung.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: address books 1792–2002 (with gaps); duplicate parish registers (C 21/II)
- F83 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „Stadtgeschichte – Daten", https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/stadtgeschichte_daten.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Reformation 1524/25; to Bavaria 1806
- F88 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Nürnberg", https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F150 Bayern.Recht, „Benützungsordnung für die staatlichen Archive Bayerns (ArchivBO), §§ 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13" [Rules of use for the State Archives of Bavaria], https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivBO/true – accessed November 2, 2026
- F163 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „Melde- und Registerauskünfte", https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/meldeundregisterauskuenfte.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F194 LAELKB, Kirchenbücher (as F160/F3) – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: periods from last entry of the book, for written information from the respective date
- F195 GDA, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg (as F88/F36), https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: four alternative locations (Lichtenau near Ansbach, Augsburg, Landshut, LAELKB); closure Oct./Nov. 2026; Rollnerstraße offices only; no directions given; closed 25.12.2026–05.01.2027
- F210 Erzbistum Bamberg, homepage (self-description), https://www.erzbistum-bamberg.de/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: the archdiocese covers large parts of the administrative districts of Upper and Middle Franconia, plus a small part each of Lower Franconia and the Upper Palatinate
- F211 Bistum Würzburg, „Bistum", https://www.bistum-wuerzburg.de/bistum/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: „Das Bistum Würzburg umfasst die katholische Kirche im Raum Unterfranken" [the Diocese of Würzburg comprises the Catholic Church in the Lower Franconia area]
- F212 Bistum Eichstätt, „Das Bistum", https://www.bistum-eichstaett.de/wir-sind/das-bistum/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: diocese in the administrative districts of Upper Bavaria, Upper Palatinate, Middle Franconia, and Swabia; about 6,025 km²; eight deaneries
- F213 Matricula, Regensburg (list of parishes), https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/regensburg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: parishes Marktredwitz (St. Josef), Wunsiedel, Selb (Herz Jesu), Arzberg in the Diocese of Regensburg on Matricula

- F214 Archivportal-D, Staatsarchiv Würzburg [today Kitzingen], „Verhältnisse der Juden im Sprengel des Landgerichts (ä.O.) Brückenau“ [Conditions of the Jews in the district of the Landgericht (older Bavarian district court and administrative office) Brückenau], Regierung des Untermainkreises, Kammer des Innern 832, 1817–1832, https://www.archivportal-d.de/item/S6UBSW27JDUPSMIJ5MXL36RRYMNS4HSF – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: file contains, among other things, a Judenmatrikel and copies of letters of protection (Schutzbriefe)

Chapter 2

Online First – What You Can Find from Home

2.1 What works online – and what doesn't

For Franconia (Franken) there is good news: you can read most Catholic parish registers (Kirchenbücher) up to 1875 on screen free of charge, and the Lutheran (evangelisch) ones for a fee. (F9, F14, F7) On top of that there are newspapers, maps, and databases from genealogical societies. What you will **not** find online: civil registry records (Standesamtsregister) after 1876 (with a few exceptions), more recent parish registers, most files of the state archives (Staatsarchive), and anything about living people. (F48, F12, F3) So plan like this: first go as far as possible online, then make targeted inquiries (Chapter 3) or travel there (Chapter 6).

2.2 Catholic parish registers: Matricula

Matricula is a portal through which church archives in several European countries show their parish registers. For Franconia, the Archdiocese of Bamberg (Erzbistum Bamberg) and the Dioceses of Würzburg and Eichstätt are on it, and at the edges also Augsburg and Regensburg. (F12, F14, F17, F18, F19) You don't need an account and you pay nothing. (F9)
How to proceed: Choose the diocese, then the parish. There you see a list of the books with call number (Signatur), type (such as baptisms, marriages, deaths), time span, and a comment. You page through the images like a book. There is no name search across the whole portal; some books do, however, contain handwritten indexes – in the list of books they appear as „Index" or with the note „Register" in the comment. (F171, F200) Some books are not

labeled separately by baptisms, marriages, and deaths – in that case, read the notes on the book and orient yourself by the years. (F14)
Which parish? A village often had no parish of its own but belonged to one in a neighboring village. For the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Matricula follows the Schematismus (directory of parishes) of 1872 and links to a digitized copy of it – that helps with assigning places. (F171) For Lutheran places, the statistical parish descriptions (including those of 1853, 1881, 1898, and 1929/31) referred to by the Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB (archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria) are helpful; for the Coburger Land (Coburg region) there is a separate gazetteer (Ortsverzeichnis). (F3)
Rights: The images are under a license that allows only non-commercial use without modification. For your own research that is no problem. Anyone who publishes something should inform the archive. (F1) More on this in section 4.6.

2.3 Lutheran parish registers: Archion

The Lutheran regional church (Landeskirche) in Bavaria is gradually putting its parish registers on the **Archion** portal. It is operated by Kirchenbuchportal GmbH in Stuttgart, which was founded in 2013 by the Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (Protestant Church in Germany, EKD) and eleven regional churches. (F172) The directory is arranged by deaneries (Dekanate) – in Franconia, for example, Ansbach, Bamberg, Bayreuth, Coburg, Erlangen, Fürth, Hof, Nuremberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, and Würzburg. (F6)
Check first, then buy: You can see free of charge whether your parish's books are already online; Archion shows the images themselves only with a purchased pass. (F8) A monthly pass costs €19.90 and allows 50 downloads, an annual pass €178.80 with 600 downloads; you can view without limit, and no pass renews automatically (as of November 2026). (F7, F8) **Tip:** First collect all the parishes you need, and then buy a monthly pass for one concentrated month of research.
Under the Landeskirchliches Archiv, Archion also has a small section with **registers of Jewish communities**. (F21)

2.4 FamilySearch: free, but with sign-in

FamilySearch is a non-profit service of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; using it costs nothing, but you need a free account. (SQ23, SQ24) Especially useful for Franconia: a collection with a **name index of births, marriages, and deaths in the city of Nuremberg from 1803 to 1886** – with over one million entries. The originals are in the Stadtarchiv Nürnberg (Nuremberg City Archives). (F68) In addition, there are the collections "Germany, Bavaria, Catholic Church Records, 1650–1875" and "Germany, Bavaria, Catholic and Lutheran Church Records, 1591–1963". Which parishes they contain is not stated on the overview page; for the second there is a separate holdings list ("Inventory"); otherwise search the catalog for your place. (F173, F174) Some images are accessible only at a FamilySearch center. (SQ23)

2.5 Places, maps, and lordships

Which place belonged where? The **Historischer Atlas von Bayern (Historical Atlas of Bavaria)** describes for individual areas who owned villages and farms before 1800 and which administration they were under. Older volumes of the Franconia series (Teil Franken) are available free of charge online as PDFs. (F175) For today's municipal affiliations, keep in mind the territorial reform (Gebietsreform) of 1972 to 1978. (F62)
Old maps: Bavaria was completely surveyed between 1808 and 1864 in order to set the land tax. This **original survey (Uraufnahme)** shows every village with its houses and land parcels (Flurstücke); in the **BayernAtlas** you can view the sheets free of charge and generate extracts as PDFs. (F58) The Coburg region was not yet part of Bavaria at that time. (F35) The land-tax cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster) in the state archives lists for each property (Anwesen) the house number, plot numbers (Plannummern), and owner; on the sheets of the Uraufnahme the house numbers are in red, the plot numbers in black. Using these numbers you can often find an ancestor's house on the map again (Chapters 1.5, 8, and 9). (F94, F109)
Images for your own publications: For screenshots from the BayernAtlas, the surveying administration requires a source citation; resale is prohibited.

By contrast, the historical topographic maps from its OpenData offering are freely usable under an open license. (F59, F60)
bavarikon, the cultural portal of the Free State of Bavaria, collects digitized copies from libraries, archives, and museums; the former Bayerische Landesbibliothek Online has been merged into it. (F54, F55) Old address books of Franconian cities have been digitized by, among others, the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library), for example Bamberg 1890 and Nuremberg 1896; you can find them through the Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek (German Digital Library) (search term „Adressbuch" plus the place name). (F216, F217) Some cities have also put their address books online elsewhere; Erlangen, for example, from 1751 to 1990 (with gaps) in the GenWiki. (F71)

2.6 Newspapers: digiPress and the Deutsches Zeitungsportal

digiPress, the newspaper portal of the Bavarian State Library, contains millions of pages of Bavarian newspapers from the 17th century to mostly the 1920s, all full-text searchable. (F56, F57) There you will find death notices, engagements, official announcements, and auctions. The **Deutsches Zeitungsportal (German Newspaper Portal)** of the German Digital Library is also worth a look. (SQ29)
Practical tip: Text recognition (OCR) does not read old Fraktur (blackletter) type without errors. Search for spelling variants of the name and combine it with the place or occupation.

2.7 By researchers for researchers

- **Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken (GFF) (Society for Family Research in Franconia):** The society, based in Nuremberg, has existed since 1921. (F63) Its most important search tool is the **Index Personarum**; some collections, such as family registers of Lutheran congregations around Uffenheim, could, according to information from 2020, only be viewed at the society's office. (F64) You will find the current offerings, membership fee, and library opening hours on gf-franken.de.

- **Bayerischer Landesverein für Familienkunde (BLF) (Bavarian State Association for Genealogy):** It works mainly for Old Bavaria (Altbayern) and Swabia (Schwaben); the annual fee is €22 to €25 (as of November 2026). (F65, F66)
- **Verein für Computergenealogie (CompGen, German genealogy society):** online local family books (Online-Ortsfamilienbücher) (early October 2026: 1,382 books with just under 24 million person records), the reference work GenWiki, and the transcribed casualty lists (Verlustlisten) of World War I with around 8.5 million entries. (F218, F72, SQ31) Check whether there is a local family book (Ortsfamilienbuch) for your place – but verify important data in the parish register. (SQ33)

Important: You may freely use the data of the Verein für Computergenealogie for your private research; commercial reuse is excluded. Other societies have their own terms. (SQ63)

2.8 The state archives online

The State Archives of Bavaria (staatliche Archive Bayerns) catalog their holdings in a joint online database, partly with digitized images (Digitalisate); since July 22, 2026, it has been part of the **protected virtual reading room (geschützter virtueller Lesesaal)**. (F178) You can search there without signing in; to order, you need an account (as of November 2026). (F215, F39) In the virtual reading room: with one account for all archives you can research and order. Registration usually requires only name, address, and purpose; family research is free of charge except for reproductions. (F39) The holdings also appear in the **Archivportal-D**, but not always in their latest state there. (F69) According to the terms of use (as of November 2026), you may freely reuse digitized images shown online by the state archives; you must cite the archive and call number. (F40)
City archives also have online offerings – the Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, for example, has a holdings database and a city encyclopedia (Stadtlexikon). (F70)

2.9 Step by step: your search strategy

1. **Clarify the place:** today's place, the parish at that time, the lordship (Herrschaft) at that time (section 2.5).
2. **Clarify the denomination:** Catholic → Matricula; Lutheran → Archion (first check free of charge what is online).
3. **Already researched?** Local family book, GFF, online family trees as leads – never adopt them unchecked.
4. **After 1876:** civil registry office (Standesamt) or city archives (Chapter 3); for Nuremberg up to 1886, FamilySearch first.
5. **Living circumstances:** newspapers (digiPress), maps (BayernAtlas), address books.
6. **Prepare for the archive:** search the holdings in the state archives' virtual reading room, note down call numbers.

2.10 Checklist "Online first"

> For every place, I know the parish and denomination at that time.
> I have looked through the Catholic books on Matricula.
> For Lutheran books, I checked free of charge what is online at Archion before buying a pass.
> I have searched for a local family book.
> I have noted every find with portal, book, image number, address (URL), and date accessed (Chapter 5).
> Whatever is missing online is on my list for inquiries (Chapter 3) or the trip (Chapter 6).

Sources for Chapter 2

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless otherwise stated.

- F1 Matricula, terms of use, https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/nutzungsbedingungen – accessed November 2, 2026

Supports: images under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (no commercial reuse, no modification); report publications with data/images to the archive/diocese, for printed works a complimentary copy

- F3 LAELKB, „Kirchenbücher“, https://www.archiv-elkb.de/unsere-bestaende/kirchenbuecher – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: parish registers/digitized images of almost 1,250 parishes (as of 09/2026); reading room digitized images only, no originals; periods baptism 110, marriage/confirmation 80, burial 30 years from last entry; information only after expiry of period and handover; digitization by 2030, delivery to Archion mostly monthly; Coburg not Bavarian in 19th c., separate gazetteer
- F6 Archion, archive page LAELKB, https://www.archion.de/de/alle-archive/bayern/landeskirchliches-archiv-der-evangelisch-lutherischen-kirche-in-bayern – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: arranged by 62 deaneries; parish decides where the books remain; funding 2019–2030
- F7 Archion, „Zugang kaufen“, https://www.archion.de/de/zugang-kaufen – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: 1 month €19.90 (50 downloads), 3 months €52.20, 1 year €178.80; no automatic renewal
- F8 Archion, help page „Subscription & Passes“, https://www.archion.de/en/help-contact/subscription-passes – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: images only with a pass; unlimited viewing
- F9 Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg, „Pfarrmatrikel“, https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/bestaende/matrikel/pfarrmatrikel1/Uebersicht/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: around 2,400 volumes; many back to Thirty Years’ War, some 16th c.; since Pentecost 2022 books before 1875/76 freely on Matricula
- F12 Matricula, Bamberg, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/bamberg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: holdings up to 1875, from 1876 civil registry offices
- F14 Matricula, Würzburg, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/wuerzburg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: online alphabetically since December 10, 2024; update 20.10.2026: up to „Sandberg“ plus Schweinfurt/Würzburg, approx. 4,400 volumes; pages not labeled by entry type
- F17 Matricula, Eichstätt, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/eichstaett/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Diözesanarchiv Eichstätt, contact
- F18 CompGen, news item 2020, https://www.compgen.de/?p=23955 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Diocese of Augsburg on Matricula, including parishes around Dinkelsbühl/Feuchtwangen; images from 1960s microfilms

- F19 CompGen, news item 2023, https://www.compgen.de/?p=58934 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Diocese of Regensburg on Matricula since May 24, 2023
- F21 Archion, LAELKB „Juden“, https://www.archion.de/de/alle-archive/bayern/landeskirchliches-archiv-der-evangelisch-lutherischen-kirche-in-bayern/juden – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: section with registers of Jewish communities (16 places)
- F35 GDA, „State Archive Coburg“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/archives/state-archive-coburg – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Coburg not Bavarian until 1920; emigrant indexes; part of the personnel files in Gotha; advance registration required
- F39 GDA, leaflet „Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/aktuelles/faltblatt-gvl-22.7.2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: GVL since July 22, 2026, one account for all state archives; family research free of charge except for reproductions
- F40 GDA, terms of use, https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/footer/nutzungsbedingungen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: online digitized images CC0/Public Domain Mark; state the archive and call number; complimentary copy requested
- F48 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, FAQ, https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/faqs.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: civil status registers only by written inquiry, not online
- F54 BayernPortal, service „bavarikon“, https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/leistung/71707505877 7 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: bavarikon = portal of the Free State for art, culture, regional studies; operated by BSB
- F55 CompGen, „Von der Bayerischen Landesbibliothek Online nach bavarikon“, 07.03.2025, https://www.compgen.de/?p=70171 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: BLO being transferred to bavarikon, no longer accessible since 07/2025
- F56 idw, press release BSB 28.10.2021, https://idw-online.de/de/news778345 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: digiPress: approx. 8.2 million newspaper pages, 17th c. to mostly 1920s, full text
- F57 digiPress, https://digitale-sammlungen.de/en/c/fb7c9e2a-acca-496d-9752-cd6c1a2b9f6c – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: full-text search across all titles, calendar view; reproductions fee-based
- F58 LDBV, leaflet „Historische Karten“, https://www.ldbv.bayern.de/mam/ldbv/dateien/faltblatt_historischekarten.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Uraufnahme 1808–1864 for the Grundsteuerkataster, approx. 23,000 sheets, village sheets 1:2,500; position sheets 1:25,000; PDF extracts in BayernAtlas free of charge

- F59 LDBV, terms of use Geoportal/BayernAtlas (as of 09/2026), https://ldbv.bayern.de/mam/ldbv/dateien/nutzungsbedingungen_geoportal_bayernatlas_bayernatlasplus.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: license per geo-resource according to metadata; source citation required for screenshots; resale prohibited → images in a book only after clarification
- F60 LDBV, OpenData newsletter 2026/1, https://geodaten.bayern.de/odd/m/3/pdf/newsletter_archiv/2026_01.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: historical topographic maps and Wening views in the OpenData portal under CC BY 4.0
- F62 Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, press release Gebietsreform 19.09.2022, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/ueber-uns/2022-9-sept-20-hsta-pm_gebietsreform_versand.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: 1.7.1972 counties 143 → 71; municipal territorial reform until May 1, 1978, municipalities 7,073 → 2,052
- F63 CompGen, „100 Jahre Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken“, 23.11.2021, https://www.compgen.de/?p=42198 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: GFF founded 1921, name since 1925; website gf-franken.de
- F64 Archion forum, „Einreichung von Stammbaumdaten bei der GFF“ [Submitting family tree data to the GFF] (2020), https://www.archion.de/en/forum/goto/post?id=3021 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Index Personarum (GFF search tool); Mägerlein/Wendel collections only at the Nuremberg office
- F65 BLF, home page, https://www.blf-online.de/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: libraries in Augsburg, Munich, Passau, Regensburg; „Blätter des BLF“; district groups without Franconia
- F66 BLF, „Mitgliedsbeitrag“, https://www.blf-online.de/mitgliedsbeitrag – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Germany €22 (direct debit) / €25
- F68 FamilySearch, “Germany, Bavaria, Nuremberg, Civil Registration, 1803–1886”, https://familysearch.org/search/collection/2660214 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: approx. 1.24 million records; originals Stadtarchiv Nürnberg
- F69 GDA, „Einführung Onlinerecherche“ [Introduction to online research] (2021), https://www.gda.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Medien_fuer_Unterseiten/2021_Einfuehrung_Onlinerecherche_09-09-2021.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: finding-aid database of all state archives; data also in Archivportal-D
- F70 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „Online-Recherche“, https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/online_recherche.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: overview of holdings, holdings database, Stadtlexikon
- F71 Stadt Erlangen, Stadtarchiv online offerings, https://erlangen.de/en/aktuelles/stadtarchiv-onlineangebote – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Erlangen address books 1751–1990 digital (GenWiki)

- F72 CompGen, Verlustlisten, https://compgen.de/category/unsere-projekte/verlustlisten – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: World War I casualty lists transcribed, approx. 8.5 million records (completed 08/2014)
- F94 Bayerischer Landesverein für Familienkunde, „Das bayerische Grundsteuerkataster (Vortrag C. Heigl, 16.02.2022)“ [The Bavarian land-tax cadastre (lecture by C. Heigl)], https://www.blf-online.de/sites/default/files/blf_termine_dateien/2022-02-15_grundsteuerkataster.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F109 GDA, „Anleitung zur Familienforschung in Bayern (J. Wild)“ [Guide to family research in Bavaria], https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/typo3/_migrated/content_uploads/familienforschung.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F171 Matricula, Bamberg (introduction), https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/bamberg/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: arrangement according to Schematismus 1872 (link to Google Books); indexes marked in title fields; all books up to and including 1875
- F172 Archion, „Über uns“, https://www.archion.de/de/ueber-uns – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Kirchenbuchportal GmbH Stuttgart, founded 2013 by EKD and eleven regional churches, further shareholders
- F173 FamilySearch, collection 3398459, https://familysearch.org/search/collection/3398459 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: “Germany, Bavaria, Catholic Church Records, 1650-1875”, 1,140,810 records
- F174 FamilySearch, collection 4234521, https://familysearch.org/search/collection/4234521 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: “Germany, Bavaria, Catholic and Lutheran Church Records, 1591-1963”, 319,501 records, inventory list
- F175 Kommission für bayerische Landesgeschichte, HAB Teil Franken Reihe I Heft 16 (Weber 1967), https://www.geschichte-bayerns.de/files/repo/kblg/hab-f-i/kblg.hab.fi.16/HAB-FI-16_Weber_1967.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: volumes of the Franconia series freely available as PDF
- F178 GDA, online database under GVL interface, https://www.gda.bayern.de/service/findmitteldatenbank/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: former finding-aid database address shows the archival structure (Tektonik) in the „Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal“ (ActaProWeb)
- F200 Matricula, Weismain St. Martin, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/bamberg/weismain-st-martin/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: parish in the Archdiocese of Bamberg; registers 1587–1966
- F215 Staatliche Archive Bayerns, Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal, search, https://www.gda.bayern.de/gvl/search.xhtml – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: search form accessible without signing in; sign-in/registration for archive use; digital ordering under „Meine Bestellungen“ (My orders)

- F216 Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, „Adressbuch Stadt Bamberg. 1890“ (data provider: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek), https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/3PNXLHCTF5NA3XRAOS4LCMWRGJVXC2CB – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: digitized copy of the Bamberg address book 1890 (MDZ, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11559269-0)
- F217 Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek, „Adreßbuch von Nürnberg. 1896 = Jg. 19“ (data provider: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek), https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/item/2TZDXZIWTHO724WAW6L3PUCDQXXW4IMW – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: digitized copy of the Nuremberg address book 1896 (MDZ, urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11735502-3)
- F218 CompGen, „15 neue Online-Ortsfamilienbücher im August und September 2026“, 03.10.2026, https://www.compgen.de/2026/10/15-neue-online-ortsfamilienbuecher-im-august-und-september-2026/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: 1,382 online local family books with just under 24 million person records; new ones include OFB Trossenfurt (Haßberge county)
- SQ23 https://www.familysearch.org/de/locations/affiliates/faq/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch: services free of charge; sign-in with own account required to search/view historical records; some images only at FamilySearch centers or affiliate libraries
- SQ24 https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/whyfamilysearchfree/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch non-profit, funded by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- SQ29 https://www.deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de/newspaper (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Deutsches Zeitungsportal: 3,238 newspapers, 37,038,414 pages, 1609–1994, 29 data partners; free of charge, without access restrictions (account only for bookmark lists); selection by title, place, year, date range
- SQ31 https://compgen.de/?p=2687 (14.08.2014, accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: World War I casualty lists: transcription 2012–2014 completed, over 31,000 pages, over 8.5 million entries (name, place of origin)
- SQ33 https://www.compgen.de/?p=38866 (04.09.2021, accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: local family book: families of a place/parish with life dates, alphabetical, linked; online OFBs at online-ofb.de; GenWiki category also lists printed OFBs
- SQ63 https://www.compgen.de/?p=49324 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)

Supports: Verein für Computergenealogie: information and data on the websites freely usable at no charge, for private research; commercial reuse of the data excluded (post 02.06.2022)

Chapter 3

Making Inquiries to Offices, Archives, and Parishes

Not everything is on the internet. Certificates after 1876, more recent parish registers (Kirchenbücher), residence registration cards (Meldekarten), and files are kept in government offices and archives – and often reach you only through a well-written inquiry. This chapter shows whom to write to in Franconia (Franken), what belongs in your inquiry, what it costs, and how long it takes.

3.1 When is an inquiry worthwhile?

Write only once you cannot get any further online (Chapter 2) and you have a **specific question**: one person, one event, one place, an approximate year. No archive will answer "Everything about the Krämer family." The more precise the question, the more targeted the search – the Stadtarchiv Nürnberg (Nuremberg City Archives), for example, says so explicitly. (F158)

3.2 Whom do you write to?

You are looking for …	Responsible office	Note
Birth, marriage, death **from 1876 on**, still within the retention periods	**Standesamt** (civil registry office) of the place where the event occurred	Retention periods: births 110, marriages 80, deaths 30 years (F25, F26)

You are looking for …	Responsible office	Note
older civil registry records (retention periods expired)	**Stadt- or Gemeindearchiv** (city or municipal archives)	in Bavaria usually not the Staatsarchiv (state archives) (F144, F145, F146)
Catholic parish registers **up to 1875**	online at Matricula (Chapter 2)	diocesan archives (Bistumsarchive) can help with questions about their holdings
Catholic parish registers **from 1876 on**	Bistumsarchiv (diocesan archives) or Pfarramt (parish office)	their own closure periods, e.g., Würzburg (3.5)
Lutheran (evangelisch) parish registers	**Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB** (archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria) in Nuremberg, or the parish office	check Archion first (Chapter 2)
Residence registration cards, lists of inhabitants	city or municipal archives	holdings vary greatly (3.6)
Files of government offices and courts, cadastral records (Kataster), contract registers (Briefprotokolle)	**Staatsarchiv** of the administrative district (Regierungsbezirk)	Chapters 9 and 10

Which Staatsarchiv is responsible for your town, and what changed in Kitzingen and Nuremberg in 2026, is explained in Chapter 1.5.

3.3 What belongs in an inquiry?

1. **Your name and your full mailing address** – even in emails.
2. **The person you are looking for:** full name (including maiden name and spelling variants), dates of birth and death or time period, place of residence, religious denomination.

3. **What you already know** and where it comes from (source).
4. **The specific question:** "Please send an extract from the death register for 1931" rather than "What do you know about …?"
5. **Your relationship** to the person and documentation of it, if the office requires it (3.4).
6. **A cost limit:** "Please let me know in advance if the costs will exceed €40." The archives do not require this, but it protects you from surprises.
7. **Purpose:** family history research (Familienforschung) – at the state archives this matters for the fee rules (no time-based fees); church and city archives, on the other hand, usually do charge for family history research.

For the Standesamt, this includes names, dates of birth, names of the parents, the certificate or register number if available, your registered address (Meldeanschrift), a **copy of your ID**, and an explanation of your relationship. (F146) Mark the ID copy as a copy and black out anything the office does not need (such as the access number). Ready-made templates for the Standesamt, parish office, diocesan archives, Landeskirchliches Archiv, city archives, and state archives can be found on the Sample Letters page; the fees are listed in sections 3.4 to 3.6.

3.4 Standesamt: Who can obtain certificates?

Who can obtain a certificate from the civil status register (Personenstandsregister) is governed by § 62 of the Personenstandsgesetz (Civil Status Act):

- **without further requirements**, the person themselves, spouses, registered partners (Lebenspartner), and ancestors and descendants in the direct line – that is, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren;
- **siblings**, for the birth and death registers, if they credibly demonstrate a legitimate interest (berechtigtes Interesse);
- **everyone else** only if they credibly demonstrate a legal interest (rechtliches Interesse);

- even **before the retention periods expire**, a legitimate interest is sufficient if the last of the persons concerned to die has been dead for 30 years.

Anyone at least 16 years old can submit the application. (F28, F146, F190) This overview is not a substitute for legal advice; in each individual case, the Standesamt decides.
For family history research, this means: for your own direct line, you must explain your descent and, if the Standesamt requires it, document it – usually with your own certificates and those of your parents. For uncles, aunts, or cousins it becomes more difficult as long as the retention periods are still running (Section 1.2).
Fees in Bavaria (Kostenverzeichnis [schedule of fees], as of November 2026): (F147, F146, F149, F187)

- Certificate, information, or inspection: **€12**;
- Searching through registers: €15 per quarter hour or part thereof, **at least €25**;
- Surcharge for an extensive search when information such as the date or the Standesamt is missing: €15 per quarter hour or part thereof, €5 in simple cases.

Larger cities give their own examples: the Standesamt Nürnberg, for instance, lists a search fee for extra effort, for example for genealogy, of €5 to €100. (F149) According to the BayernPortal (Bavarian government services portal), processing usually takes 2 to 10 days. (F146) An online application is available only where the municipality offers one. (F146)

3.5 Church archives

Catholic:

- The **Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg** (Archives of the Archdiocese of Bamberg) does not itself carry out private family history research. The parish registers up to 1875 are freely available on Matricula; in the reading room, using the digitized images costs €7 per day, and registration is required. (F155, F9, F11)

- **Archiv und Bibliothek des Bistums Würzburg** (Archives and Library of the Diocese of Würzburg) protect baptisms for 120 years, marriages and deaths for 100 years. For events from 1876 on, the archives first refer you to the civil registry offices, whose retention periods are shorter. Digital research in the reading room is subject to a fee for private family history research; the archives do not list the amounts online. Inquiries can be made via an online form, by email, or by mail. (F156)
- **Diözesanarchiv Eichstätt** (Diocesan Archives of Eichstätt): The parish registers are on Matricula; more recent entries are restricted there (reported when they went online in 2021: baptisms 120, marriages and deaths 100 years). Ask the archives directly about access and fees; the contact details are listed on Matricula. (F157, F189)

Lutheran: The **Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB** in Nuremberg provides written information only once the registers have been transferred to the archives and the closure periods have expired: baptisms 110, marriages 80, burials 30 years – for written information counted from the date of the individual entry, and for having a register produced in the reading room counted from the last entry in the register (Section 1.3). (F160, F3, F194) Family history inquiries are accepted in writing only. (F4, F5) Expert information (Fachauskünfte) costs **€16 per quarter hour or part thereof**. (F161) Expert information, including transcripts (Abschriften), is subject to a fee; there is no entitlement to time-consuming information, reading help, or transcriptions, and an advance payment may be required. (F162, F193) For more recent entries, ask the parish office. (F3)

3.6 State and city archives

Staatsarchive (state archives): For written inquiries, a formal application for use (Benutzungsantrag) can be waived. The archives may answer inquiries but are not obliged to do the research themselves; their information may be limited to pointing out which archival records might be relevant. (F150) For demonstrably family-history purposes, no time-based fees are charged, but reproductions and expenses such as postage are. (F150, F42, F39) So

expect an answer like: "There is record group X on this; please consult it in the reading room."
Since July 22, 2026, there has been the **geschützter virtueller Lesesaal** (protected virtual reading room): one account for all of Bavaria's state archives, with an online application for use, ordering, bookable consultations with professional staff, and an online application for shortening closure periods. (F152) For the Staatsarchiv Kitzingen, the (undated) agency page on the BayernPortal still stated on November 2, 2026, that written genealogical inquiries are not possible until further notice; according to the website of the Staatliche Archive (State Archives of Bavaria), the archive is in trial operation after its move, and archival records can be used after advance registration. Ask about the current status beforehand. (F154, F188) The state archives are closed over the 2026/2027 New Year period. (F188)
Stadtarchive (city archives) set their own fees. Examples (as of 2025/2026):

- **Nuremberg:** €35 per requested entry or register extract, **even if nothing is found**; residence registration data €35 per half hour or part thereof; inquiries preferably via an online form, processing currently takes about 6 to 8 weeks. (F163)
- **Fürth:** expert information €35 per half hour or part thereof; a fee waiver is possible for scholarly and local-history purposes, but not explicitly for family history research. (F166, F192)
- **Bamberg:** civil status registers since 1876, family sheets (Familienbögen) and residence registers (Melderegister) from 1870; fee based on time spent. (F164, F165)
- **Hof** €45 per half hour or part thereof, **Erlangen** €20 per quarter hour or part thereof – in both cases even if nothing is found. (F50, F51, F191)
- **Bayreuth:** residence registration records from before 1945 were burned in April 1945. (F52)

3.7 Closure periods in archives

For archival records relating to individuals, the following has applied in Bavaria since **January 1, 2026**: (F170, F141)

- **10 years after death**;
- if the date of death is not known: **100 years after birth** (until the end of 2025 it was 90 years);
- if the date of birth is also unknown: 60 years after the record was created.

This applies correspondingly to city and municipal archives as well. (F144) Some archives still state the old 90 years on their websites. (F158) You can apply for a shortening; for personal data it is possible only with the consent of the persons concerned, or if it is indispensable for certain research purposes and interests worthy of protection are safeguarded. (F170) Church archives have their own periods (3.5).
Data protection: The EU General Data Protection Regulation (Datenschutz-Grundverordnung, GDPR) does not apply to deceased persons; the archives' closure periods still apply, however. (F169) Be careful with living persons: ask only for what you really need, and ideally share data about living relatives only with their consent.

3.8 Realistic expectations for costs and waiting times

- **Costs even without results:** At several archives you pay for the search even if nothing is found (Nuremberg, Hof, Erlangen); at the Standesamt, merely searching through registers costs at least €25. (F163, F50, F51, F147)
- **Waiting time:** civil registry offices usually a few days, city archives often weeks. (F146, F163)
- **One inquiry instead of many:** Combine several people from the same place in one inquiry – but numbered and clearly organized.
- **Following up:** If nothing arrives after the stated processing time, follow up once politely – with the date and subject line of your first inquiry – unless the archive explicitly asks you not to (as the Stadtarchiv Nürnberg does). (F163)

3.9 Checklist "My Inquiry"

Already checked everything online (Chapter 2)?
Right office (3.2), retention and closure periods considered (3.4, 3.5, 3.7)?
One specific question, person with dates and place?
My name, address, relationship, ID copy if needed?
Purpose „Familienforschung" (family history research) and cost limit stated?
Inquiry entered with date in my research log (Chapter 5)?

Sources for Chapter 3

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless otherwise stated.

- F3 LAELKB, „Kirchenbücher", https://www.archiv-elkb.de/unsere-bestaende/kirchenbuecher – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: parish registers/digitized images from almost 1,250 parishes (as of 09/2026); reading room digitized images only, no originals; periods baptism 110, marriage/confirmation 80, burial 30 years from last entry; information only after periods have expired and registers have been transferred; digitization until 2030, delivery to Archion mostly monthly; Coburg not Bavarian in the 19th century, separate gazetteer
- F4 LAELKB, „Benutzung", https://www.archiv-elkb.de/benutzung – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: advance registration recommended; advance ordering by email; private family history research €10/day; own photos for private use after submitting a form; inquiries in writing to archiv@elkb.de
- F5 LAELKB, „Kontakt", https://www.archiv-elkb.de/kontakt – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Veilhofstraße 8, 90489 Nürnberg; family history research not by phone, only form/email
- F9 Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg, „Pfarrmatrikel", https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/bestaende/matrikel/pfarrmatrikel1/Uebersicht/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: about 2,400 volumes; many back to the Thirty Years' War, some 16th century; since Pentecost 2022 registers before 1875/76 freely available on Matricula
- F11 AEB, „Öffnungszeiten", https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/archivnutzung/Oeffnungszeiten/ – accessed November 2, 2026

Supports: Regensburger Ring 2, Bamberg; usually Mon–Wed 8 a.m.–4 p.m.; registration required

- F25 J. Wild, „Anleitung zur Familienforschung in Bayern“ [Guide to family research in Bavaria], GDA, as of 05/2001, https://www.gda.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Medien_fuer_Ausbildung_Qualifizierung/famfor.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: civil registry offices in Bavaria from January 1, 1876; duplicate parish registers (Pfarrmatrikel-Zweitschriften) occasionally from 1803, regularly approx. 1825–1875, mostly in the state archives; record types (Briefprotokolle, land-tax cadastre [Grundsteuerkataster] from 1808, permission to settle/marry [Ansässigmachung/Verehelichung] from 1825, domicile files [Heimatakten], conscription [Konskription]); Kriegsarchiv (War Archives)
- F26 § 5 PStG, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pstg/__5.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: retention period (Fortführung) birth 110, marriage 80, death 30 years
- F28 § 62 PStG, https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pstg/__62.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: entitled persons: persons concerned, spouses, ancestors/descendants; otherwise legal interest; legitimate interest suffices if the last person concerned has been dead for 30 years
- F39 GDA, leaflet „Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/aktuelles/faltblatt-gvl-22.7.2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: GVL (protected virtual reading room) since July 22, 2026, one account for all state archives; family history research free of charge except for reproductions
- F42 § 13 ArchivBO, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivBO-13 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: no fee for demonstrably family-history purposes
- F50 Stadtarchiv Hof, „Familienforschung ab 1.7.2024“, https://www.hof.de/fileadmin/user_upload/leben-und-erleben/stadtarchiv/pdf-s/Familienforschung_ab_1.7.2024.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: own research on site free of charge; in writing €45 per half hour
- F51 Stadt Erlangen, Stadtarchiv Benutzung, https://erlangen.de/en/aktuelles/benutzung_dienstleistungen – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: private research €20 per quarter hour, even without result
- F52 Stadtarchiv Bayreuth, Information (2024), https://www.bayreuth.de/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Information-on-researching-historical-persons-in-the-Bayreuth-City-Archive.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: residence registration sheets (Meldebögen) from before 1945 destroyed in April 1945
- F141 Bayerische Staatskanzlei, Verkündungsplattform Bayern, „Gesetz zur Änderung des Bayerischen Archivgesetzes vom 23.12.2025 (GVBl. 2025 S. 652), in Kraft 01.01.2026“, https://www.verkuendung-bayern.de/gvbl/2025-652/ – accessed November 2, 2026

- F144 Bayern.Recht, „Art. 13 BayArchivG (Kommunale Archive)“, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivG-13 – accessed November 2, 2026
- F145 StMI/StMUK, Bayern.Recht, „Vollzug des Bayerischen Archivgesetzes; Kommunale Archivpflege, Gem. Bek. vom 22.01.1992 (KWMBl. S. 73)“, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayVV_2241_K_717/true – accessed November 2, 2026
- F146 BayernPortal (Freistaat Bayern), „Geburtsurkunde; Beantragung (Stand 05.08.2026)“, https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/leistung/062458319418o – accessed November 2, 2026
- F147 Verkündungsplattform Bayern, „Verordnung zur Änderung des Kostenverzeichnisses vom 13.04.2019 (GVBl. 2019 S. 179), Tarif-Nr. 2.II.8/4“, https://www.verkuendung-bayern.de/gvbl/2019-179/ – accessed November 2, 2026
- F149 Stadt Nürnberg, „Standesamt Nürnberg, Gebührenübersicht (ohne Datum)“, https://nuernberg.de/internet/buergeramt_mitte/gebuehren.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F150 Bayern.Recht, „Benützungsordnung für die staatlichen Archive Bayerns (ArchivBO), §§ 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13“, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivBO/true – accessed November 2, 2026
- F152 GDA, „Faltblatt „Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal“ (22.07.2026)“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/aktuelles/faltblatt-gvl-22.7.2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F154 BayernPortal, „Staatsarchiv Kitzingen (Behördenseite)“, https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/behoerde/433316303670 – accessed November 2, 2026
- F155 Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg, „Familienforschung“, https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/Familienforschung/ – accessed November 2, 2026
- F156 Archiv und Bibliothek des Bistums Würzburg, „Familienforschung“, https://abbw.bistum-wuerzburg.de/archiv/familienforschung/ – accessed November 2, 2026
- F157 Matricula (ICARUS), „Eichstätt, Diözesanarchiv (Kontakt)“, https://data.matricula-online.eu/de/deutschland/eichstaett/ – accessed November 2, 2026
- F158 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „FAQ“, https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/faqs.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F160 Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB, „Kirchenbücher“, https://www.archiv-elkb.de/unsere-bestaende/kirchenbuecher – accessed November 2, 2026
- F161 Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB, „Gebührentafel (01.12.2020)“, https://www.archiv-elkb.de/system/files/dateien/Geb%C3%BChrentafel.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F162 Landeskirchenrat der ELKB, „Archivbenutzungs- und Gebührenordnung vom 17.02.2004 (KABl. 4/2004 S. 75–80)“, https://www.archiv-elkb.de/sites/archiv-elkb.de/files/d7docs/Archivbenutzungsordnung.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F163 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „Melde- und Registerauskünfte“, https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/meldeundregisterauskuenfte.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F164 Stadtarchiv Bamberg, „Familienforschung“, https://www.stadtarchiv-bamberg.de/familienforschung.html – accessed November 2, 2026

- F165 Stadtarchiv Bamberg, „FAQ“, https://www.stadtarchiv-bamberg.de/faq.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F166 Stadt Fürth, „Gebührensatzung für das Stadtarchiv mit wissenschaftlicher Bibliothek, Fassung 14.01.2025“, https://fuerth.de/fileadmin/redaktion/01-Rathaus/Ortsrecht/40_6_gebuehrensatzung_stadtarchiv_fuerth.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F169 Amt für Veröffentlichungen der EU, EUR-Lex, „Verordnung (EU) 2016/679 (DSGVO), Erwägungsgrund 27“, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32016R0679 – accessed November 2, 2026
- F170 Bayern.Recht, „Art. 10 BayArchivG (Text gilt ab 01.01.2026)“, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivG-10 – accessed November 2, 2026
- F187 Verordnung zur Änderung der Verordnung über die Benutzungsgebühren der unteren Vermessungsbehörden und des Kostenverzeichnisses vom 15.06.2026 (GVBl. 2026 S. 311), https://www.verkuendung-bayern.de/gvbl/2026-311/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: § 2 amends only tariff nos. 4.II.1/4.II.2; tariff no. 2.II.8 unaffected; in force July 1, 2026
- F188 GDA, Staatsarchiv Kitzingen, https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-kitzingen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: trial operation after move 02/2026; access only after advance registration; closure of all state archives over New Year 2026/27; no statement on genealogical inquiries
- F189 CompGen, „Katholische Kirchenbücher aus Eichstätt bei Matricula …“ (17.12.2021), https://www.compgen.de/?p=42952 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: went online 15.12.2021; restriction baptisms under 120, marriages/deaths under 100 years; free of charge (secondary source)
- F190 § 62 PStG (Volltext), https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/pstg/__62.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: siblings only birth/death registers; application from age 16; para. 3 before expiry of the retention periods
- F191 Stadtarchiv Hof, Familienforschung ab 1.7.2024 (as F50) – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: €2 flat postage fee
- F192 Stadt Fürth, Gebührensatzung Stadtarchiv (as F166), § 6 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: waiver only for scholarly, local-history, educational purposes; reduction in individual cases
- F193 ELKB, Archivbenutzungs- und Gebührenordnung 2004 (as F162), §§ 8, 20, 21 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: § 8 para. 2 „Transkription“ (transcription); § 20 does not mention family history research; § 21 advance payment
- F194 LAELKB, Kirchenbücher (as F160/F3) – accessed November 2, 2026

Supports: periods from the last entry in the register, for written information from the respective date

Chapter 4

Reading Old Handwriting – With and Without AI

You have found the entry – and you can't read it. Almost everyone feels this way at the start. But the old handwriting is not a secret code: with a letter chart and a little practice, you will soon be reading your first entries yourself. This chapter shows which scripts you will encounter, where to learn to read them, where the pitfalls are – and how programs using artificial intelligence (AI) can help you without leading you astray.

> **Note:** Prices and terms of online services change frequently. All information is without guarantee; the date of each piece of information is given.

4.1 Which scripts you will encounter

Kurrent script (Kurrentschrift, also called „deutsche Schreibschrift", German cursive) is the handwriting of most older parish registers (Kirchenbücher), court books (Gerichtsbücher), and letters. It developed in the 16th century, and people continued writing it in everyday life until well into the 20th century. Its appearance changed considerably over time: someone who can read a hand from 1850 will often still struggle with one from 1650. (SQ201, SQ202)

Sütterlin script (Sütterlinschrift) is a simplified form of Kurrent for beginning writers, designed by Ludwig Sütterlin and promoted by the Prussian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerium). After school trials beginning around 1915, from 1924 on all children in the first grade of elementary school (Volksschule) in Prussia learned this script. A decree of September 1934 then standardized the school script for the entire

Reich starting with the 1935/36 school year – and thus for Bavaria as well. Bavaria had previously gone its own way: there, Sütterlin caught on as the initial school script only to a limited extent, and in 1933/34 children learned a separate „Volksschrift“ (“people’s script”). (SQ200, SQ240, SQ242, F219) You will encounter Sütterlin mainly in 20th-century letters, diaries, and postcards. In early 1941 the Nazi leadership had printed matter and official correspondence switched to the Latin „Normalschrift“ (“standard script”); a decree of September 1, 1941, stipulated that schools would teach only this script. (SQ203, SQ240) Many people, however, continued writing privately for decades the way they had learned.

Latin script – the one we use today – also appears in old parish registers, right in the middle of the German text: scribes often set off names, foreign words, and Latin terms this way, while writing the rest of the text in Kurrent. (SQ201, SQ202) This helps you: such names jump out when you skim a page.

Good to know: Don’t expect archive staff to read old handwriting for you. The Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB (archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria) in Nuremberg, for example, advises on searching for and ordering archival records, but expects you to learn to read older scripts yourself – and regularly offers courses for this. The guide of the Staatliche Archive Bayerns (State Archives of Bavaria) also assumes that family historians will familiarize themselves with the old scripts. (F4, F109)

4.2 Learning to read – without AI

It all starts with a **letter chart** (Buchstabentafel): all the letters of the old script next to today’s letters. Print one out, place it next to every document, and use it to read real words from the very beginning.

Freely accessible practice resources on the internet (as of November 2026):

- The **Universität Zürich** (University of Zurich) offers „Ad fontes“, a publicly accessible learning resource for working with archival sources, including an exercise on Kurrent script and sample alphabets. An account with a username of your choice is possible; the site does not mention any costs. (SQ205, SQ241)

- **Brigham Young University** (USA) provides a learning resource on German handwriting: letter charts, variants of Kurrent letters, numerals, and exercises ranging from single letters to whole texts. At the time of access, no registration was required; in addition to the English version, there is a German version. (SQ206, SQ243)
- The **Verein für Computergenealogie** (CompGen, German genealogy society) has made freely available a lecture by Martin Munke (Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, SLUB [Saxon State and University Library Dresden]) on deciphering Kurrent and Sütterlin, with slides (2022). (SQ207)

Learning with others: Search the program of your Volkshochschule (adult education center) for „Sütterlin" or „alte Schrift" (old handwriting); the offerings change from semester to semester. Some libraries and local history societies (Heimatvereine) host open reading sessions to which you can bring your own letters – for example, the Schleswig-Holsteinische Landesbibliothek (Schleswig-Holstein State Library) with its „Transkriptionscafé" (transcription café). (SQ209) In Hamburg, the „Sütterlinstube", a nonprofit association, transcribes old documents on a volunteer basis in exchange for a voluntary donation; you can also submit online (as of October 2025). (SQ208, SQ244) Genealogical societies in your region can also help.
Practical tip: Practice first on short texts with a fixed structure, such as filled-in printed forms or lists – long letters come later. (SQ201) Entries whose content you already know also work well – for example, the baptism of an ancestor whose date of birth you know from a certificate. That way you can check your reading.

4.3 Typical pitfalls

Letters that look alike. Some Kurrent letters closely resemble each other:

- **e and n:** Pay attention to where the two downstrokes are connected – for e, more in the upper half; for n, at the bottom. When someone writes in a hurry, often only the meaning of the word helps. (SQ223)

- **u and n:** Without an extra mark, the two would be identical. You recognize the u by the curved stroke above it – it is easy to overlook, or the scribe forgot it. (SQ223)
- **A stroke over m or n** usually doubles the letter: „kom̄en“ means „kommen“ (to come). (SQ223)
- **h, f, and long s** have long loops above and below the line and therefore look very similar. Compare words in the same hand that you can read with certainty. (SQ223)
- **The forms of s:** At the end of a syllable or word stands the round final s; otherwise, usually the long ſ. The ß was originally a ligature of ſ and z. (SQ201, SQ202)
- **Capital letters** are often ornate. You will recognize names more easily if you know which families lived in the village.

Abbreviations. Scribes shortened frequently used words and indicated omitted endings with strokes or loops. (SQ202) Keep your own list – the same pastor usually abbreviates the same way.

Latin terms. Lutheran (evangelisch) parish registers are generally kept in German, Catholic ones more often in Latin. (SQ245) Individual Latin words and abbreviations also appear in Lutheran registers, however, especially in older volumes and in dates. In the Catholic areas of Franconia (Franken), you will therefore encounter Latin frequently: many Matrikeln – the term for Catholic parish registers – are kept entirely or mostly in Latin; for how long depends on the parish and the pastor. This word list, arranged by occasion, will help you get started (SQ219, SQ220, SQ246, F2):

Occasion	In the parish register	Meaning
Baptism	natus / nata	born (he / she)
Baptism	baptizatus / baptizata	baptized (he / she)
Baptism	susceptores	the godparents
Marriage	copulati (sunt)	(were) married
Burial	sepultus / sepulta	buried (he / she)
Family	pater / mater · filius / filia	father / mother · son / daughter

Occasion	In the parish register	Meaning
Family	viduus / vidua	widower / widow
Family	illegitimus / illegitima	born out of wedlock
Baptism	patrini, levantes	the godparents (like susceptores)
Baptism	parentes · infans	the parents · the child
Marriage	sponsus / sponsa	groom / bride
Marriage	proclamationes, bannum	banns
Marriage	conjuges	married couple
Burial	obiit · denatus / denata	died · deceased (he / she)

The endings change depending on the sentence and gender; the beginning of the word usually already reveals the meaning.

Watch out for the months September through December. Scribes liked to abbreviate them with numerals: "7bris" or "7ber" for September, "8bris" for October, "9bris" for November, "10bris" or "Xbris" for December. (F2) The numeral comes from the old Roman calendar, in which September was the seventh month – so it is not today's month number. Anyone who reads "9bris" as September is off by two months.

Dates based on the church year. Often there is no date, but the name of a feast or Sunday instead – for example "Dom. Rogate" (the fifth Sunday after Easter), "Dom. 3 p. Trin." (the third Sunday after Trinity Sunday), or a saint's day such as "Michaelis" (Michaelmas, September 29). Movable feasts depend on the date of Easter. (SQ206) Convert such dates with a calendar tool. The standard reference work for this is by Hermann Grotefend („Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit" [Chronology of the German Middle Ages and Modern Era], in short form as „Taschenbuch der Zeitrechnung" [Pocket Handbook of Chronology]); an online version with a calculator for movable feasts is freely accessible. (SQ221, SQ247) Also keep the calendar change in mind – in Franconia, with its Catholic and Lutheran territories, it is especially important. The Catholic territories adopted the new, Gregorian calendar shortly after the reform of 1582, the three Franconian dioceses in 1583: in Eichstätt, October 5 was followed immediately by

October 16; in Würzburg, November 4 was followed by November 15; in the Hochstift Bamberg (Prince-Bishopric of Bamberg), the new calendar was likewise introduced in November 1583. (F208, F220) The Protestant imperial estates (Reichsstände) – in Franconia, this also included the Lutheran margraviates (Markgraftümer) and imperial cities (Reichsstädte) such as Nuremberg (Chapter 1.1) – did not switch until 1700: February 18 was followed immediately by March 1; a parish register therefore counts only up to the 18th in February 1700. (SQ222, SQ248, F209, F220) Until then, dates in neighboring Catholic and Lutheran towns could differ by ten days. For entries before 1700, therefore, check which calendar the parish used. Even afterward, Catholics and Protestants calculated Easter differently for several decades – in 1724 and 1744 the feast fell on different Sundays – until the Protestant estates adopted the Gregorian Easter calculation at the end of 1775. (F220)

Practice box (Übungsbox): Deciphering a marriage entry
This entry is **entirely made up** and has already been transcribed here into modern letters. This is roughly how it would appear in a parish register around 1790 – with abbreviations and a date based on the church year:
„Dom. Rogate copul. Mstr. Joh. Lorenz Haberkorn, Tuchmacher allh., Mstr. Joh. Georg Haberkorns ehel. 2. Sohn, u. Jgfr. Anna Margaretha, Hans Michael Strobels, Söldners in hiesig. Pfarrei, ehel. ält. Tochter. 1789.“
Your tasks: Expand the abbreviations. Who is getting married, who are the fathers, and on what day did the wedding take place?
Solution: „Am Sonntag Rogate wurden getraut Meister Johann Lorenz Haberkorn, Tuchmacher allhier, Meister Johann Georg Haberkorns ehelicher zweiter Sohn, und Jungfrau Anna Margaretha, Hans Michael Strobels, Söldners in hiesiger Pfarrei, eheliche älteste Tochter.“ (On Rogate Sunday were married Master Johann Lorenz Haberkorn, cloth maker of this place, legitimate second son of Master Johann Georg Haberkorn, and the maiden Anna Margaretha, legitimate eldest daughter of Hans Michael Strobel, Söldner (smallholder) in this parish.) (A Söldner owned a Sölde, a small rural holding with little land; F224.) Easter fell on April 12 in 1789; Rogate is the fifth Sunday after it – so **May 17, 1789**. Double-check this with a calendar calculator (SQ221).

4.4 AI as a reading aid: what it can do – and where it goes wrong

Specialized handwriting programs. The best known is Transkribus, operated by the European cooperative READ-COOP. You upload the image of a page, and the program suggests a transcription. Ready-made reading models are available for Kurrent and Sütterlin. A general model for German handwriting from the user community reports an error rate of just over 8 percent of characters on its test pages. (SQ212, SQ213) In a line of 60 letters, that means about five are wrong on average – a problem with names and numbers. For its best parish register models, the provider states under 5 percent for well-preserved registers, without disclosing how this was measured. (SQ212)
Costs (as of November 2026): In the free plan you receive 50 credits per month; one handwritten page uses one credit. Unused credits in the free plan expire at the end of the month. The smallest paid plan costs €99 per year. (SQ210, SQ211)
General AI assistants are chat programs to which you can show a photo and ask questions. They suggest readings, interpret abbreviations, and translate Latin. Their weakness is dangerous: where they are unsure, they fill in what sounds plausible. A scholarly article from 2023 describes how such a program, when smoothing out machine-read letters, can insert names that do not appear in the original at all. (SQ215) An invented first name looks just as convincing as a real one.
The basic rule of this guide: Every fact you adopt is checked against the original. The AI provides a suggestion – you have to do the reading yourself.

> **From experience (Aus der Praxis): My reading aid**
> Kurrent was the biggest hurdle for me. Today, AI helps me with it. I show it the entry and get a suggested reading, often with an explanation of abbreviations as well. That saves a lot of time – and sometimes it puts me on a track I would not have found on my own.
> Nevertheless, the basic rule applies without exception: every fact is checked against the original. I compare names, numbers, and places letter by letter myself. Only then does anything go into my family tree.

4.5 Your workflow in six steps

1. **Record the source citation (Fundstelle).** Archive or portal, parish, register, year, page or image number – before you start reading.
2. **Read it yourself first.** Use your letter chart to read as much as possible yourself. Mark uncertain passages with square brackets, such as "Joh[ann?]".
3. **Get an AI suggestion.** Have a program read the page or the excerpt – but only if you are allowed to use the image for this (see Section 4.6).
4. **Compare, letter by letter.** Place your reading, the AI suggestion, and the original side by side. Where they contradict each other, only the original decides.
5. **Check the context.** Do the age, parents, and place match what you already know? A detail that doesn't fit often points to a reading error.
6. **Label and file.** Adopt only what you have confirmed against the original; anything uncertain stays marked. Chapter 5 shows how to organize your documentation and assign a degree of certainty to information.

Practical tip: Don't just ask the AI "What does it say?" but also: "Which words are uncertain?"

4.6 Data protection and rights when uploading

May I share the image? Anyone who uploads an image to an online program passes it on to that program's provider. So check the terms of the institution the image comes from beforehand (as of November 2026):

- **FamilySearch** permits the images only for your own non-commercial research. Its Terms of Use also prohibit transmitting content to other websites or posting it there. (SQ217, SQ249) Uploading to an online service would likely fall under this – if in doubt, ask FamilySearch beforehand or refrain from doing so.
- **Archion:** According to its terms and conditions (Geschäftsbedingungen), Archion does not restrict individual officially downloaded pages; reproducing content beyond that or making it public is prohibited

without permission. According to the forum moderators, individual downloads may be added to your own online family tree with a source citation, but not entire registers; screenshots do not count as official downloads. (SQ218, SQ250) These texts do not explicitly address uploading to AI programs.

- **Matricula** (the free portal through which many Catholic dioceses present their Matrikeln, i.e., Catholic parish registers): The images are under a Creative Commons license that permits only non-commercial use without modification. Anyone who publishes something with data or images from Matricula – in print, digitally, or online – should inform the responsible archive or diocese; for books, a complimentary copy may be requested. (F1) The terms do not explicitly address uploading to AI programs.
- **Your own photos and scans from archives** are subject to the terms of the respective archive (see Sections 1.3, 1.5, and 6.3).

When in doubt, ask – and never publish other people's images without written permission. These notes are not a substitute for legal advice.

What happens to my data? Transkribus states that it processes all data on its own servers in Austria; its help page does not say clearly whether uploaded pages are also used to improve general reading models. (SQ214) With general AI assistants, depending on the provider, your inputs are used to train future programs unless you opt out; with one major provider, this can be turned off in the settings. (SQ216) Do not upload any documents containing data about living people – no certificates of your parents, no ID documents.

4.7 Checklist "Reading Old Handwriting"

I have a letter chart for Kurrent (and, for more recent letters, for Sütterlin) at hand.
I practice first on entries whose content I already know.
I keep my own list of abbreviations and Latin terms.
I convert feast-day and Sunday dates with a calendar tool.
Before every upload, I have checked whether I am allowed to share the image and whether it contains data about living persons.

Every fact from an AI suggestion has been checked against the original.
Uncertain readings are marked as uncertain.

Sources for Chapter 4

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“ [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless otherwise stated.

- F1 Matricula, Nutzungsbedingungen, https://data.matricula-online.eu/en/nutzungsbedingungen – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: images under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 (no commercial reuse, no modification); publications using data/images to be reported to the archive/diocese, complimentary copy for printed works
- F2 FamilySearch Research Wiki, “Latin Genealogical Word List”, https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Latin_Genealogical_Word_List – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: month forms 7ber/7bri, 8ber, 9ber, 10ber; patrini/levantes, sponsus/sponsa, proclamationes, bannum, obiit, denatus, conjuges, copulati, parentes, infans, illegitimus
- F4 LAELKB, „Benutzung“, https://www.archiv-elkb.de/benutzung – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: advance registration recommended; advance ordering by email; private family history research €10/day; own photos for private use after submitting a form; inquiries in writing to archiv@elkb.de
- F109 GDA, „Anleitung zur Familienforschung in Bayern (J. Wild)“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/typo3/_migrated/content_uploads/familienforschung.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F208 Dieter J. Weiss: Das exemte Bistum Bamberg 3. Die Bischofsreihe von 1522 bis 1693 (Germania Sacra NF 38,1), Walter de Gruyter, Berlin/New York 2000, Vorwort S. VII, https://personendatenbank.germania-sacra.de/files/books/NF%2038,1%20Wei%C3%9F%20Bamberg%203%20Bfsreihe.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Gregorian calendar reform carried out in the Hochstift Bamberg by Bishop Ernst von Mengersdorf on November 10, 1583
- F209 Katharina Habermann: Die Kalenderbriefe des Georg Albrecht Hamberger im Kontext der Kalenderreform von 1700, Universitätsverlag Göttingen 2012, DOI 10.17875/gup2012-55, https://library.oapen.org/handle/20.500.12657/32665 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Protestant imperial estates resolved in 1699 at the Imperial Diet (Reichstag) in Regensburg to adopt the „Verbesserter Kalender“ [Improved Calendar]; in 1700, February 18 was followed by March 1

- F219 Bettina Irina Reimers: Ludwig Sütterlins Konzept einer Schrift – Methode und Praxis des Schreibenlernens. In: S. Reh/D. Wilde (Hg.): Die Materialität des Schreiben- und Lesenlernens, Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt 2016, S. 231–256, hier S. 251 mit Anm. 57, https://bbf.dipf.de/de/forschen-publizieren/pdfs-forschen-publizieren/reimers-bettina-irina-2016-ludwig-konzept-einer-schrift-methode-und-praxis-des-schreibenlernens – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: adoption of Sütterlin: Thuringia/Oldenburg 1929, Hesse 1930, Baden/-Danzig 1931, Württemberg 1932; Bavaria went its own way, Sütterlin „nur bedingt" [only to a limited extent] adopted; 1933/34 „Volksschrift"
- F220 H. Grotefend: Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit, Online-Ausgabe (hg. von Horst Ruth), Glossar „Neuer Stil", https://bilder.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/gaeste/grotefend/g_n.htm – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Gregorian calendar 1583: Bavaria and the dioceses of Freising, Eichstätt, Regensburg, among others, October 5→16; Diocese of Würzburg November 4→15; Protestant Germany 1700 February 18→March 1; Easter discrepancies 1724 and 1744; adoption of the Gregorian Easter calculation by the Protestant estates 13.12.1775
- F224 Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob und Wilhelm Grimm, „sölde" und „söldner" (vol. 16), digital: https://www.dwds.de/wb/dwb/s%C3%B6lde – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: sölde = „kleines ländliches besitzthum" [small rural property]; söldner (2) = Köthner, cf. seldner
- SQ200 https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/gnd124061168.html (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Zilch, Reinhold: Art. „Sütterlin, Ludwig", in: Neue Deutsche Biographie 25 (2013), S. 688–689: designs submitted to the Prussian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs in 1910, school trials → 1914 two „Normalalphabete" [standard alphabets]; established in Prussian elementary schools from the mid-1920s, also introduced in other German states, taught until 1941
- SQ201 https://archivfuehrer-kolonialzeit.de/schrift (accessed November 1, 2026, undated) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Archivführer Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte (FH Potsdam, operator not explicitly named), page „Schrift": Kurrent the general cursive script until the mid-20th century; Sütterlin introduced in Prussia in 1915; names/foreign words often in Latin cursive; tip: start with tables/forms; forms of s
- SQ202 https://lav.rlp.de/fileadmin/lav/Bilder/Geschichte_entdecken/Archivpaedagogik/Lesekurs_Broschuere.pdf (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Landesarchivverwaltung Rheinland-Pfalz, brochure „Lesekurs" (undated): Kurrent the main script in the 16th century, many variants in the 17th/18th centuries; Sütterlin introduced in elementary schools in 1917; 3.1.1941 switch to Antiqua „Normalschrift", schools only this script; long/round s, ß from ſ+z; abbreviations/abbreviation marks

- SQ203 https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/unimut/themen/fraktur-verbot.html (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Universität Heidelberg, UNiMUT, „Verbot der Frakturschriften durch die Nationalsozialisten“: circular of January 3, 1941 (Bormann, Reich Chancellery), Antiqua henceforth „Normal-Schrift“, government offices without Fraktur
- SQ205 https://www.adfontes.uzh.ch/; https://www.adfontes.uzh.ch/en/ad-fontes/informationen-zum-projekt (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Universität Zürich, „Ad fontes“ (learning resource for archival work): navigation lists „Übung zur deutschen Kurrentschrift“ [exercise on German Kurrent script] and „Musteralphabete“ [sample alphabets]
- SQ206 https://script.byu.edu/german-handwriting/tools/genealogical-vocabulary/feast-days (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Brigham Young University, Script Tutorial, German Handwriting, page “Feast Days”: alphabet charts, Kurrent variants, numerals, tests (Letter/Word/Passage); movable feasts depend on the date of Easter. Tutorial home page not accessible on November 1, 2026 (client error)
- SQ207 https://www.compgen.de/?p=45263 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Verein für Computergenealogie (CompGen), „Handschriftliche Quellen für die Familienforschung entziffern – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe“ (04.03.2022): lecture by Martin Munke (SLUB Dresden, Saxonica department) of February 10, 2022, recording (YouTube) and slides freely available
- SQ208 https://www.compgen.de/?p=65845 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: CompGen, „Wer übersetzt Sütterlin- bzw. Kurrent-Schriften?“ (29.06.2024, revised 15.08.2024): Sütterlinstube Hamburg (nonprofit, founded 2009, transcription for a donation); Transkribus „bis zu 100 Seiten pro Monat“ [up to 100 pages per month] free (as of 2024)
- SQ209 https://www.schleswig-holstein.de/DE/landesregierung/ministerien-behoerden/LBSH/Veranstaltungen/_Aktuell/20261028_Transkriptionscafe (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: State of Schleswig-Holstein / State Library, event „Transkriptionscafé“ (with the Schleswig-Holsteinischer Heimatbund), next date 21.04.2027, 5–7 p.m.; bring your own documents (Kurrent/Sütterlin); costs not stated
- SQ210 https://www.transkribus.org/plans (accessed November 1, 2026; page „© 2026“) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Transkribus (READ-COOP SCE), “Plans”: Free €0, 50 credits/month, approx. 50 pages, no credit card; Scholar €99/year (€8.25/month billed annually; monthly

€19.99 according to FAQ), 900 credits/year; Team €399 or €449/year (contradiction on the page); prices incl. 20% Austrian VAT; top-up 250 credits €59.50

- SQ211 https://www.transkribus.org/de/credits (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Transkribus, „Transkribus-Guthaben verstehen“: handwriting + line recognition 1 credit/page; Free Plan credits expire monthly
- SQ212 https://www.transkribus.org/de/kirchenbuecher-transkribieren (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Transkribus, „Kirchenbücher transkribieren“ (provider's page): models for Kurrent/Sütterlin parish registers 1550–1940; best models over 95% character accuracy for well-preserved Kurrent parish registers (no method stated); confidence scores per line; 50 credits/month free
- SQ213 https://www.transkribus.org/models/the-german-giant-i (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Transkribus model “The German Giant I” (Transkribus Community, PyLaia, published 20.03.2023): German in Kurrent and Latin script, 16th–21st centuries, CER 8.3% on its own validation set
- SQ214 https://help.transkribus.org/is-my-data-safe (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Transkribus help “Is my data safe?”: “All data is processed and stored on our own servers in Austria”; use permits processing “to provide the service and improve it”
- SQ215 https://arxiv.org/pdf/2308.02044 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Spina, Salvatore: Artificial Intelligence in archival and historical scholarship workflow: HTS and ChatGPT, arXiv:2308.02044 (2023): when normalizing Transkribus transcriptions, ChatGPT introduced, among other things, names that do not appear in the original
- SQ216 https://openai.com/policies/how-your-data-is-used-to-improve-model-performance/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: OpenAI, “How your data is used to improve model performance” (updated March 13, 2026): content from ChatGPT for individuals may be used for training unless you opt out (data controls/privacy portal; temporary chat) – as an example of a major provider, not named in the text
- SQ217 https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/article/do-i-have-a-legal-right-to-use-images-i-find-on-familysearch (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch Help, “Do I have a legal right to use images I find on FamilySearch?”: use for “incidental, personal, noncommercial genealogical research purposes”; “Contracts prohibit the publication or distribution of the actual record images”; written permission of the record custodian required (undated)

- SQ218 https://www.archion.de/en/forum/goto/post?id=108841; https://www.archion.de/en/forum/threads/gefundenes-dokument-in-online-familienstammbaum-stellen.21291/latest (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Archion forum, thread “Can I upload to FamilySearch and Ancestry?”, moderator (vnagel2004) May 24, 2025 and September 3, 2025: official downloads (no screenshots) with source citation permitted in your own tree at Ancestry/MyHeritage/FamilySearch, not entire registers; cites terms and conditions (AGB) no. 9.3.5; additionally thread „Gefundenes Dokument in Online-Familienstammbaum stellen“ (02.02.2025)
- SQ219 https://script.byu.edu/latin-handwriting/tools/common-phrases (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Brigham Young University, Script Tutorial, Latin, “Common Phrases used in Parish Records”: baptisatus/-a, sepultus/-a, copulati sunt in matrimonio, natus/-a est, vidua, viduus, illegitimus, susceptores
- SQ220 https://www.freereg.org.uk/information-for-transcribers/latin-words-to-recognise (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FreeREG, “Latin words to recognise”: filius, filia, natus, nata (pater/mater: basic vocabulary, not listed there)
- SQ221 https://mdr-maa.org/resource/zeitrechnung-des-deutschen-mittelalters-und-der-neuzeit/; https://www.archion.de/en/forum/threads/der-grotefend-online-kalenderrechner-osterrechner-und-vieles-mehr.26864/post-132138 (accessed November 1, 2026; direct links manuscripta-mediaevalia.de and handschriftenzentren.de not reachable on November 1, 2026, therefore removed) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Grotefend, Hermann: Zeitrechnung des deutschen Mittelalters und der Neuzeit, 2 vols., Hannover 1891–1898, HTML version on manuscripta-mediaevalia.de (catalog entry Medieval Digital Resources, “No Fee”, with calculator for movable feasts); additionally Archion forum, moderator 25.03.2026: calculator „GROTEFEND online“ of the Deutsches Handschriftenzentrum (German Manuscript Center) (handschriftenzentren.de).
- SQ222 https://www.archion.de/en/forum/goto/post?id=17658 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Archion forum, thread „Gregorianischer Kalender“, moderator 26.06.2022: Protestant imperial estates Feb. 18/19 (Julian) → March 1, 1700 (Gregorian); parish register Groß Mühlingen: February 1700 only 18 days
- SQ223 https://www.staff.uni-mainz.de/hschmahl/PalaeographieKirchenbuecher27.10.2022.pdf (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Schmahl, Helmut (JGU Mainz, Historisches Seminar): „Kirchenbücher als historische Quellen“, paleography exercise winter semester 2022/23, session 27.10.2022

(slide PDF): e/n (hook connected at top or bottom), u-arc, stroke over m/n = doubling, h/f/long s with ascenders/descenders easily confused

- SQ240 https://bbf.dipf.de/de/forschen-publizieren/pdfs-forschen-publizieren/reimers-bettina-irina-2016-ludwig-konzept-einer-schrift-methode-und-praxis-des-schreibenlernens (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Reimers, Bettina Irina: „Ludwig Sütterlins Konzept einer Schrift – Methode und Praxis des Schreibenlernens“, in: Reh, Sabine/Wilde, Denise (Hg.): Die Materialität des Schreiben- und Lesenlernens, Bad Heilbrunn: Klinkhardt 2016: Feb. 1915 trial classes in at least three Prussian schools (pp. 244f.); from the start of the 1924 school year all children in the 1st grade of elementary school in Prussia with Sütterlin as initial script (p. 250); decree of September 7, 1934 effective for the 1935/36 school year ends lack of uniformity throughout the Reich (p. 251); Bormann circular of January 3, 1941 concerns printed matter, circular decree of September 1, 1941: schools only Normalschrift (pp. 251f.). Saxony not mentioned
- SQ241 https://www.adfontes.uzh.ch/ (accessed November 1, 2026, built-in browser) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Universität Zürich, Ad fontes, home page (German): „Ad fontes ist öffentlich zugänglich“ [Ad fontes is publicly accessible]; registration with freely chosen username and password or AAI possible; latest news item 07.03.2023; no information on costs
- SQ242 https://www.dresden.de/media/pdf/stadtarchiv/Tafeln_34-38_Schulwesen.pdf (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Stadtarchiv Dresden, „Schätze des Stadtarchivs“, panels 34–38 Schulwesen (school system) (undated): Sütterlin designed the script 1912–1914 on behalf of the Prussian ministry; „Sie wurde 1935 an den Schulen als Normalschrift eingeführt.“ [It was introduced in schools as the standard script in 1935.] No earlier date specific to Saxony
- SQ243 https://script.byu.edu/; https://script.byu.edu/german-handwriting/alphabet/kurrent-letter-variations (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: BYU Script Tutorial, home page and subpage “Kurrent Letter Variations”: German Tutorial „English / Deutsch“; no information on registration or costs, pages accessible without registration
- SQ244 https://www.leinetal24.de/welt/botschaften-so-entschluesseln-sie-alte-briefe-und-vergessene-zr-93966862.html (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Hirschbeck, Anita (KNA): „So entschlüsseln Sie alte Briefe und vergessene Botschaften“, as of October 3, 2025 (including on leinetal24.de): Sütterlinstube Hamburg, volunteers transcribe old documents, online submission, voluntary donation. Association’s own website not accessible (robots)
- SQ245 https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Germany_Church_Records (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)

Supports: FamilySearch Research Wiki, „Germany Church Records“ (last edited 07.10.2026): “Catholic records are usually written in Latin or German, while other records will be written in the local language.”

- SQ246 https://www.ag.ch/media/kanton-aargau/bks/kultur/staatsarchiv/bkssta r-latein-fuer-familienforscher.pdf (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Staatsarchiv Aargau (BKS, Abt. Kultur), information sheet „Häufige lateinische Wendungen in Kirchenbüchern“ [Common Latin phrases in parish registers] (17.08.2016): including illegitimus/illegitima, viduus/vidua, sepultus, compatres/patrini (godparents)
- SQ247 https://www.compgen.de/?p=33986; https://uni-tuebingen.de/de/109038 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: CompGen, „Hermann Grotefend – digital: Taschenbuch der Zeitrechnung“ (18.05.2021, revised 30.03.2022): HTML version with calculation of movable feasts and calendar conversion by Horst Ruth (manuscripta-mediaevalia.de); additionally „Grotefend digital“ (Uni Graz, GAMS). Additionally, Uni Tübingen, Medieval History, links to the same version. Target pages themselves blocked
- SQ248 https://edoc.bbaw.de/files/2630/13_Jahresthema2015_16_Wielen_edoc.pdf (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Wielen, Roland: „Das Kalender-Edikt des Brandenburgischen Kurfürsten Friedrich III. vom 10. Mai 1700“, in: Grötschel u. a. (Hg.): Vision als Aufgabe, Berlin 2016, S. 185–195, hier S. 188f.: resolution of the Protestant imperial estates in Regensburg 23.9.1699 (Julian) on the „Verbesserter Kalender“ [Improved Calendar] from 1700; February 19–29, 1700 omitted; Easter calculated astronomically (discrepancies 1724, 1744). Saxony not specifically mentioned
- SQ249 https://www.familysearch.org/en/legal/terms (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch, Terms of Use (Updated 2023-09-01): materials only “for your personal, noncommercial use”; “You may not transmit or distribute content from this site to other sites.”; no posting on other websites/networks without permission; AI not explicitly mentioned
- SQ250 https://www.archion.de/de/agb (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Archion, AGB (terms and conditions) (page states „Stand: 20. März 2015“): no. 9.3.5 individual downloaded content „unterliegen keiner Nutzungsbeschränkung seitens des Anbieters“ [is not subject to any usage restriction on the part of the provider]; no. 5.1 c) no reproducing/modifying/making publicly accessible beyond the functions without granted rights; no. 7.4 b) publish data of living persons only with consent; upload to other services/AI not addressed

Chapter 5

Staying Organized – Sources, Citations, Certainty

> **Note:** Software, file formats and online services change. All information is provided without guarantee; the date of each piece of information is stated.

After your first finds, the pile grows quickly: certificates, copies, scraps of notes, files, bookmarks. If you get organized now, you will save yourself a lot of searching – and a few mistakes – later. This chapter shows you how to record where you found something, how to assess information, and how to store your materials safely.

5.1 Why Stay Organized?

Being organized does three jobs:

- **Finding things again.** A year from now, you will no longer remember on which page of which parish register (Kirchenbuch) the baptism was recorded. Your note will.
- **Documenting.** Every piece of information in your family tree needs a source – a principle that professional organizations such as the National Genealogical Society (USA) also emphasize. (SQ309) Without a source, a date remains a claim.
- **Passing things on.** Your children, grandchildren or other researchers should be able to continue your work without having to ask you.

Practical tip: Write down the source right away, even before you transcribe the entry (see Section 4.5, step 1). Looking it up afterwards takes much more time.

5.2 Writing Source Citations Correctly

A good source citation answers a single question: Can a stranger find the spot again without asking you? For that, you always need three things: **who** holds the record, **which** record it is (with call number [Signatur], volume, year), and **exactly where** in it (page, folio, number, image number). The Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archives), for example, asks for this order: the archive's abbreviation, the record group (Bestand) and file number, plus folio or page; for digitized images (Digitalisate), the image number is sufficient. (SQ310) The templates below follow the same structure.
Feel free to use these templates. **All examples are entirely fictitious.**

Type of source	What belongs in it	Example (fictitious)
Parish register (Kirchenbuch), original or digitized	Parish, type of book, year, page, entry number; repository (Verwahrer); how you viewed it	Kath. Pfarrei Hollfeld, Taufmatrikel 1842, S. 57, Nr. 113 (Taufe Johann Georg Leidenberger). Eingesehen als Digitalisat im Online-Portal des Bistumsarchivs, 14.03.2026. [English: Catholic parish of Hollfeld, baptismal register (Taufmatrikel) 1842, p. 57, no. 113 (baptism of Johann Georg Leidenberger). Viewed as a digitized image on the online portal of the diocesan archives (Bistumsarchiv), March 14, 2026.]

Type of source	What belongs in it	Example (fictitious)
Civil registry record (Standesamtsregister)	Civil registry office, type of register, year, number; repository (civil registry office or city archives); certificate or register copy	Standesamt Gunzenhausen, Sterberegister 1911, Nr. 48 (Margaretha Kunzelmann). Beglaubigte Registerabschrift, verwahrt im Stadtarchiv, erhalten am 02.05.2026. [English: Civil registry office of Gunzenhausen, death register 1911, no. 48 (Margaretha Kunzelmann). Certified copy of the register entry, held in the city archives (Stadtarchiv), received May 2, 2026.]
Archival file	Archive, record group (number and name), call number, folio; title and date range of the file	Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Bestand Amtsgericht Musterstadt, Nachlassakten Nr. 678: Nachlasssache Konrad Dörfler, 1898–1900, Bl. 12. Eigenes Foto im Lesesaal, 20.06.2026. [English: Nuremberg State Archives (Staatsarchiv Nürnberg), record group Local Court (Amtsgericht) Musterstadt, probate files no. 678: estate of Konrad Dörfler, 1898–1900, fol. 12. Own photo taken in the reading room, June 20, 2026.]
Online portal	Portal, archive and book as above, image number, complete web address, date accessed	Online-Kirchenbuchportal, Ev.-Luth. Pfarramt Wunsiedel, Trauungen 1801–1830, Bild 214 von 380, Eintrag 1819 Nr. 9 (Wolfrum/Seubert). https://www.example.org/buch/0000 , abgerufen 05.01.2026. [English: Online parish register portal, Evangelical Lutheran parish office of Wunsiedel, marriages 1801–1830, image 214 of 380, entry 1819 no. 9 (Wolfrum/Seubert), accessed January 5, 2026.]

Type of source	What belongs in it	Example (fictitious)
Newspaper	Newspaper title, place, date, issue, page, section; portal and address if applicable	Musterstädter Wochenblatt, 12.10.1898, S. 4, Familienanzeigen (Verlobung Hümmer/Scheuring). Digitalisat im Zeitungsportal, https://www.example.com/0000 , abgerufen 18.07.2026. [English: Musterstädter Wochenblatt, October 12, 1898, p. 4, family announcements (engagement Hümmer/Scheuring). Digitized copy on the newspaper portal, accessed July 18, 2026.]
Oral information	Who, when, where, to whom; about what; your own notes of the conversation	Auskunft einer Tante (vollständiger Name nur in der Familienakte) am 24.12.2025 in Musterdorf, mündlich an die forschende Person: Großvater sei „um 1910“ in Musterstadt geboren. Gesprächsnotiz im Ordner „Gespräche“. [English: Information from an aunt (full name only in the family file) on December 24, 2025, in Musterdorf, given orally to the researcher: grandfather was supposedly born “around 1910” in Musterstadt. Conversation notes in the folder „Gespräche“ (Conversations).]

Why the date accessed? Web addresses change; the date shows when the page could be seen in that form. In addition, save a copy of the image for your own research – as far as the portal's terms allow (Section 4.6). (SQ249, SQ250)

Good to know: Oral information is a source too – often imprecise, but valuable. Record it with the date; names of living relatives stay in your own files (Section 5.4).

5.3 How Reliable Is a Piece of Information?

Not every source is equally reliable. Three questions help you assess it. (SQ308)

1. Original or derivative (transcript)? An original is the first record made, such as the entry in the baptismal register. A good photo or digitized image of it also counts as an original. Transcripts, extracts, name indexes and databases are derivative: errors can creep in every time something is copied. A finished family tree – even a printed one – is a compilation; it leads you to sources but does not replace them. (SQ308, SQ309)

2. Firsthand or secondhand (primary or secondary information)? Ask this question for each individual piece of information, not for the document as a whole. For the date of death, a death entry is usually firsthand: the pastor or civil registrar (Standesbeamter) wrote it down shortly after the event. The date of birth in the same entry, by contrast, often came from relatives who knew it only from hearsay – in other words, secondhand. (SQ308)

3. Does the information answer my question directly? A baptismal entry names the parents directly; a note of age in a death entry gives the year of birth only indirectly. Even not finding something can tell you something (Section 5.6).

Degrees of certainty: mark them simply

Give every piece of information in your family tree one of four degrees (German: bewiesen, wahrscheinlich, möglich, offen):

Degree	Meaning	Example (fictitious)
proven	Supported by an original, firsthand source; other obvious sources checked, no unresolved contradiction	Baptism in 1842 read in the Hollfeld baptismal register (Taufmatrikel)
probable	Several clues fit together, no direct evidence	Year of birth calculated from the age given at marriage and at death

Degree	Meaning	Example (fictitious)
possible	A single clue or a family tradition	"Born around 1910 in Musterstadt" according to an aunt
open	Nothing found yet; gap deliberately marked	Bride's parents unknown

Mark the degree wherever you work: in a genealogy program in a notes field, on paper with a letter in the margin (the German original uses B, W, M, O), or with colors – the main thing is to do it the same way every time. By the way, an identical name alone is never enough for "proven": only when further characteristics such as place, occupation or parents match do you know that it is the same person.

Record contradictions instead of smoothing them over

The baptismal register and the death entry give different birth dates? That happens often. Don't silently decide in favor of one of them; instead, note both with their sources. Add which one you trust more and why – for example: "Baptismal register recorded at the time; death entry given 70 years later by the daughter-in-law." If nothing can be decided, the contradiction stays open – that way someone can continue the work later with new finds.

5.4 Filing: Paper, Files, Backups

One scheme for all file names. Name every file using the same pattern, for example:
`JJJJ-MM-TT_Ort_Art_Name` (YYYY-MM-DD_Place_Type_Name) – for instance `1842-07-17_Hollfeld_Taufe_Leidenberger-Johann-Georg.jpg` (Taufe = baptism)
The date is that of the event, not of the download; because the year comes first, the computer sorts the files chronologically. Avoid umlauts, ß and spaces – they sometimes cause trouble when copying. Create folders by family branch, and below those by person or place.

Paper and digital. Your family's originals – certificates, Ahnenpässe (Nazi-era ancestry passports), letters, photos – are best stored protected from light, cool and dry – not in the attic, not in damp basement rooms. Carefully remove metal clips; remove old adhesive tape only if the paper will not be damaged. Folders and sleeves made of acid-free material are suitable for storage. (SQ311) Scan the items, work with the scan, and keep a list noting where the paper is stored.

The 3-2-1 rule for backups. Hard drives fail, laptops get stolen. This rule has proven its worth: **3** copies of your data, on **2** different types of storage (such as your computer and an external hard drive), with **1** of them in a different location – with relatives or in online storage. (SQ300, SQ301, SQ311) The Bundesamt für Sicherheit in der Informationstechnik (BSI, German Federal Office for Information Security) also advises: keep the backup separate from the computer, back up on a fixed schedule – for example on the first Sunday of every month – and test now and then whether it can be opened. (SQ400, SQ401) Store copies in online storage encrypted. (SQ311, SQ401) If a program or file format becomes outdated, transfer your data to a current format in good time. (SQ401)

Data protection for living persons. The Datenschutz-Grundverordnung (DSGVO, the EU General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR) expressly excludes purely personal and household activities; as a rule, it therefore does not apply to your private family research as long as you use the data only for yourself and your family. (SQ306) But anyone who publishes – on the internet, in a society journal, in a book – leaves this framework. Rule of thumb: information about living persons stays in your private files. What applies to deceased persons, and when archives release records about a person, is covered in Section 3.7. (SQ81, SQ148) These notes do not replace legal advice.

5.5 Genealogy Programs, GEDCOM and Online Family Trees

Genealogy programs manage people, families, events and sources in a database. They present the data as pedigree charts (Ahnentafeln), lists and reports; some also check whether the pieces of information are consistent with each other. (SQ405) There are free and paid programs for computers,

tablets and web browsers. If you work only on paper, you can skip this section. When choosing, pay attention to three things: Can I record sources for every piece of information? Can I output my data completely (export)? And: does my data stay on my device, or is it stored with the provider?
GEDCOM is the common exchange format between programs; the files usually end in `.ged`. (SQ303) It is published by FamilySearch (see Section 2.4). (SQ302, SQ404) Two versions matter today:

- **GEDCOM 5.5.1:** released as a draft in 1999, re-released as a standard in 2019; still the most widely used today: according to the publisher, the vast majority of GEDCOM files in 2021 were in 5.5.1, and according to the Verein für Computergenealogie (CompGen, German genealogy society), almost all programs support this version (as of December 2025). (SQ303, SQ402, SQ404)
- **GEDCOM 7.0:** published in 2021 as the first major revision in about 20 years; the current version is 7.0.18 of February 17, 2026 (as of November 2026). (SQ303, SQ304, SQ403) A program for 7.0 can read older files; older programs, however, cannot understand 7.0 files. (SQ403) Conversion tools are available for switching from 5.5.1 to 7.0. (SQ305)

Before switching programs, find out which version both programs support, and spot-check after every import: did the source citations and notes come across completely? (SQ404)
Online family trees – on large portals or in society databases – have advantages: you find relatives researching the same families, and your work is preserved. Disadvantages: errors spread when others copy a tree without checking it; what has been published can hardly be taken back; and what the provider may do with your data is governed by its terms – read them before uploading. So use other people's trees only as signposts to the sources. (SQ309)
Never publish data on living persons. Some programs offer to leave out living persons when exporting – check whether yours can do this. The Verein für Computergenealogie advises not to include data on living persons when transferring data to its database. (SQ307) Archion, too, requires the consent of living persons before their data is published. (SQ250)

5.6 The Research Log

In your research log, you record every search – **including the unsuccessful ones**. "Nothing found" is a result: it keeps you from searching the same book twice. Write down exactly what range you searched. "Baptisms 1840–1845 page by page, no entry" is useful information; "child not baptized" would be a premature conclusion.

Date	Question	Where searched (source, call number)	Range	Result	Next step
March 14, 2026	Baptism of Johann Georg Leidenberger?	Catholic parish of Hollfeld, Taufmatrikel (baptismal register) (digitized, diocesan archives)	1840–1845, all pages	found: 1842, p. 57, no. 113	Search for the parents' marriage
March 20, 2026	Parents' marriage?	Catholic parish of Hollfeld, Traumatrikel (marriage register) (digitized, diocesan archives)	1835–1842, all pages	**nothing found**	Check neighboring parishes, the mother's home town, Lutheran (evangelisch) neighboring villages

(Matrikel = Catholic parish register.) A notebook is enough; on the computer, a spreadsheet works well. Keep the layout the same, and you will see at a glance where you have already looked. You will find a blank template in Section 15.5.

5.7 Checklist "Staying Organized"

For every piece of information, I have recorded the source: repository, record, exact location.
For online finds, the image number, web address and date accessed are noted.
I distinguish between original and derivative (transcript), and between firsthand and secondhand.
Every piece of information has a degree of certainty: proven, probable, possible or open.
Contradictions are in my notes with both sources.
My files follow a fixed naming scheme.
I back up according to the 3-2-1 rule, with online copies encrypted, and I have tested the backup.
I do not publish information about living persons.
My program can export GEDCOM; I know which version.
My research log also contains the searches that produced no result.

Sources for Chapter 5

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026) unless otherwise stated.

- SQ81 https://revosax.sachsen.de/vorschrift/2628 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Archivgesetz für den Freistaat Sachsen (Archives Act of the Free State of Saxony), current version valid from January 1, 2023 (last amended by Art. 2 Abs. 3 G v. 19.08.2022, SächsGVBl. S. 486): § 9 Abs. 1 anyone [may use]; § 10 Abs. 1 Nr. 3 personal data 10 years after death / 100 years after birth / 60 years after creation; § 13 Abs. 4 §§ 6–11 apply accordingly to municipal archives – same content as Q59. Q59 is a historical version (valid May 25, 2018–December 31, 2022), replaced by Q81
- SQ148 https://dsgvo-gesetz.de/erwaegungsgruende/nr-27/ (accessed November 1, 2026; official text: ABl. EU L 119 of May 4, 2016) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: GDPR (DSGVO) Recital 27: the Regulation does not apply to personal data of deceased persons; member states may provide for rules

- SQ249 https://www.familysearch.org/en/legal/terms (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch, Terms of Use (Updated 2023-09-01): materials only “for your personal, noncommercial use”; “You may not transmit or distribute content from this site to other sites.”; no posting on other websites/networks without permission; AI not expressly mentioned
- SQ250 https://www.archion.de/de/agb (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Archion, AGB (General Terms and Conditions) (page states „Stand: 20. März 2015“ [as of March 20, 2015]): No. 9.3.5 individual downloaded content „unterliegen keiner Nutzungsbeschränkung seitens des Anbieters“ [is not subject to any usage restriction on the part of the provider]; No. 5.1 c) no reproduction/editing/making publicly available beyond the functions without granted rights; No. 7.4 b) publish data of living persons only with consent; upload to other services/AI not addressed
- SQ300 https://www.computerweekly.com/de/definition/3-2-1-Backup-Strategie (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: ComputerWeekly.de, definition „3-2-1-Backup-Strategie“ [3-2-1 backup strategy] (last updated 09/2020): three copies (original + at least two backups), two different storage media, one copy external/off-site; originator of the rule not named
- SQ301 https://casrai.org/dictionary/term/3-2-1-backup-strategy (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: CASRAI Dictionary, “3-2-1 Backup Strategy” (v2026.1, status Proposed, updated September 5, 2026): at least three copies, at least two types of storage, one copy separate from the working data; all three conditions at the same time
- SQ302 https://gedcom.io/specs/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: gedcom.io, “Specifications”: current version 7.0; earlier versions 5.6 (XML), 5.5.1 (with errata), 5.5, 5.4, 5.3, 5.0, 4.0, 3.0; publisher FamilySearch (Intellectual Reserve, Inc.)
- SQ303 https://gedcom.io/specifications/FamilySearchGEDCOMv7.html (accessed November 1, 2026); Changelog https://gedcom.io/changelog/ (7.0.0 “first update to the specification in 20 years”, latest 7.0.18) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch GEDCOM 7.0 Specification, version 7.0.18 of February 17, 2026: 5.5.1 “released in draft status in November 1999 and re-released as a standard in October 2019”; file extension “.ged” recommended
- SQ304 https://www.geneamusings.com/2021/06/the-long-awaited-gedcom-70-is-here.html (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Seaver, Randy: “The Long-Awaited GEDCOM 7.0 Is Here!”, Genea-Musings, 07.06.2021, reproduces the FamilySearch announcement (“pleased to announce the

release of FamilySearch GEDCOM 7.0"; work since RootsTech 2020, completed 15.05.2021). Secondary source (blog) – primary announcement not accessed

- SQ305 https://gedcom.io/tools/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: gedcom.io, "Tools": third-party tools, including conversion 5.5.1 → 7.0 (command line and web), note on differing license/quality; no date
- SQ306 https://dsgvo-gesetz.de/art-2-dsgvo/; https://dsgvo-gesetz.de/erwaegungsgruende/nr-18/ (accessed November 1, 2026; official text ABl. EU L 119 of May 4, 2016) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: GDPR (DSGVO) Art. 2(2)(c): does not apply to processing „durch natürliche Personen zur Ausübung ausschließlich persönlicher oder familiärer Tätigkeiten" [by a natural person in the course of a purely personal or household activity]; Recital 18 (with no connection to a professional or commercial activity; but applies to providers of the tools)
- SQ307 https://compgen.de/?p=71106 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Verein für Computergenealogie (CompGen), „Transfer genealogischer Daten nach GEDBAS" [Transferring genealogical data to GEDBAS] (26.04.2025): GEDCOM upload via web service; export settings advisable „die keine Daten zu lebenden Personen (Datenschutz) transferieren" [that do not transfer any data on living persons (data protection)]; webtrees filter also for GEDCOM 7
- SQ308 https://www.evidenceexplained.com/content/quicklesson-17-evidence-analysis-process-map (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Mills, Elizabeth Shown: "QuickLesson 17: The Evidence Analysis Process Map", Evidence Explained (undated, ca. 2018): sources original/derivative/authored (authored narrative); information primary/secondary/undetermined; evidence direct/indirect/negative
- SQ309 https://cms-z-assets.familysearch.org/40/9d/f6049862241e0a09d9bc61c74e767/guidelines-for-sound-genealogical-research.pdf (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: National Genealogical Society, "Guidelines for Sound Genealogical Research" (© 1997, 2002, 2016; PDF at FamilySearch): researchers "record the source for each item of information they collect"; compilations/published works mainly as guides to original sources
- SQ310 https://www.bundesarchiv.de/im-archiv-recherchieren/archivgut-einsehen-und-nutzen/archivbesuch-vor-ort/generelle-nutzungshinweise/zitierweisen/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden")
  Supports: Bundesarchiv, „Zitierweisen" [Citation formats]: archive abbreviation, record group call number/archive number, folio or page (example „BArch, RW 19/234, Bl. 4") – as evidence for the general scheme archive–record group–call number–folio; no Saxon citation rule was found (1 search)

- SQ311 https://www.verbraucherzentrale.de/wissen/digitale-welt/datenschutz/wie-sichere-ich-analoge-und-digitale-daten-moeglichst-gut-und-lange-84297 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Verbraucherzentrale (German consumer advice center), „Wie sichere ich analoge und digitale Daten möglichst gut und lange?“ [How do I preserve analog and digital data as well and as long as possible?] (as of June 1, 2023): paper cool, dark, dry (approx. 18 °C, at most 50 % relative humidity), avoid attics and damp basements, acid-free folders/sleeves, remove clips/adhesive tape; digital data on at least two media, stored separately (e.g. with relatives or cloud), encryption recommended
- SQ400 https://www.bsi.bund.de/DE/Themen/Verbraucherinnen-und-Verbraucher/Informationen-und-Empfehlungen/Cyber-Sicherheitsempfehlungen/Daten-sichern-verschluesseln-und-loeschen/Datensicherung-und-Datenverlust/Datensicherung-wie-geht-das/datensicherung-wie-geht-das_node.html (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: BSI, „Datensicherung – wie geht das?“ [Data backup – how does it work?] (consumer page, undated): store backup „räumlich getrennt vom PC“ [physically separate from the PC]; external hard drive in another safe place; transfer data to current formats in good time. The 3-2-1 rule is not mentioned
- SQ401 https://www.bsi.bund.de/dok/10655274 (accessed November 1, 2026, built-in browser) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: BSI, „Back-up: Doppelt gesichert hält besser“ [Back-up: Doubly secured holds better] (undated, occasion World Backup Day): set a regular schedule; outdated file types/programs → transfer to a newer format
- SQ402 https://gedcom.io/faqs/02-gedcom551 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: gedcom.io, FAQ “Should I use GEDCOM 5.5.1?” (undated, page partly unfinished): “the vast majority of files created as of 2021 are in GEDCOM 5.5.1 format”; expects growing support for 7.0
- SQ403 https://www.familysearch.org/help/helpcenter/article/what-is-the-familysearch-gedcom-7-0-standard (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: FamilySearch Help, “What is the FamilySearch GEDCOM 7.0 standard?”: initiative from RootsTech 2020, “concluded May 15, 2021”; 5.5.1 released 15.11.2019 (discrepancy with Q303: October 2019 – the book says only “2019”); 7.0 can import older versions, older versions cannot import 7.0 files
- SQ404 https://wiki.genealogy.net/GEDCOM (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: GenWiki (Verein für Computergenealogie), article “GEDCOM” (last edited 08.12.2025): standard „bis zur heute aktuellen Version 7.0 von FamilySearch definiert“ [defined by FamilySearch up to today’s current version 7.0]; 5.5.1 „wird derzeit von den allermeisten Genealogieprogrammen unterstützt“ [is currently supported by the vast

majority of genealogy programs]; on import, source citations and notes are sometimes merged into collective notes

- SQ405 https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genealogieprogramm (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Wikipedia, „Genealogieprogramm“ [Genealogy program]: presentation as reports, lists, diagrams, charts; „Die meisten Genealogieprogramme ermöglichen den Im- und Export von Daten im GEDCOM-Format“ [Most genealogy programs allow import and export of data in GEDCOM format]; plausibility tests in auxiliary programs. Tertiary source

Chapter 6

The Research Trip to Franconia (Franken)

Some files are available only in the reading room – and perhaps you would like to see the church where your ancestors were baptized, or the village where their farm stood. Then a trip is worthwhile. This chapter helps you plan it so that you come back with results.

> **Note:** Opening hours, prices and rules change. All information is provided without guarantee; the date of each piece of information is stated. Check the institutions' websites before you leave.

6.1 When Is the Trip Worthwhile?

A trip is worthwhile above all when three things come together:

- **You know what you are looking for:** names, place, approximate time period and a specific question, such as "When did my ancestor take over the farm?"
- **You know where it is:** you have determined the responsible archive (Chapters 1 and 3) and checked what is already online (Chapter 2).
- **The answer is only available on site:** many archives answer only brief inquiries and refer you to the reading room for everything else (Chapter 3). (F150)

If one of these points is missing, it is better to send another inquiry first – otherwise you might only find out in the reading room that the file is held somewhere else.

6.2 Planning: Appointments, Orders, Applications

Where to go in Franconia? Important changes in 2026

Which Staatsarchiv (State Archives) is responsible for your place is explained in Chapter 1.5. Important for your trip:

- **Staatsarchiv Kitzingen** (formerly Würzburg): in trial operation after the move in February 2026; archival records are made available only with advance registration. (F85)
- **Staatsarchiv Nürnberg (Nuremberg State Archives):** because of renovation, until probably 2030 no records are made available in Nuremberg; instead, only by appointment at the four alternative locations (Chapter 1.5) – depending on where the desired record group (Bestand) is stored. Individual record groups may be temporarily unavailable, such as some record groups moved to Augsburg in October and November 2026. (F88, F36, F195)
- At the **Staatsarchiv Bamberg**, advance registration is strongly recommended. (F153)
- At the **Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg** (Archive of the Archdiocese of Bamberg), the reading room is open only Monday through Wednesday; registration is required, and use of the digitized images (Digitalisate) costs €7 per day (as of November 2026). (F155, F11)
- At the **Landeskirchliches Archiv der ELKB** (archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria) in Nuremberg, a day in the reading room for private research costs €10 (as of November 2026). (F4)

The state archives are closed over the turn of the year 2026/2027. (F188) You can find the opening hours on the archives' websites. If in doubt, have your seat confirmed by phone or email.

Preparing online: the virtual reading room

Since July 22, 2026, the state archives of Bavaria have offered the **geschützter virtueller Lesesaal** (protected virtual reading room). With an account, you can submit your application for use there, order archival records to the read-

ing room, book a workspace and, if you wish, a consultation with specialist staff. (F152) This saves a lot of time on the first morning.

The call number and the call number list

You can only order with the **Signatur** (call number), i.e. the order number of the file, which you find in the finding aid (Findbuch) (Chapter 2.8). You make the selection yourself: the state archives also make copies or scans only of files that you have selected – orders "on a topic" are not possible. (F151, F199) Before the trip, create a **call number list (Signaturliste)**: archive, call number, title of the file and your question about it, sorted by importance. That way, in the reading room you always know what comes next – even if a file is unavailable.

The application for use

In the application for use (Benutzungsantrag), you state your name, address, your project and its purpose, for example „Familie Schnabel, Raum Weismain, 1760–1900, Familienforschung" (Schnabel family, Weismain area, 1760–1900, family research). There is a separate application for each project. (F150) Bring your Personalausweis (German national ID card).

6.3 In the Reading Room

The rules

Every archive has its own reading room rules; some rules, however, apply almost everywhere:

- **Bags and coats** go into a locker – bring coins.
- **Bring a pencil.** Ink, ballpoint pens and highlighters can damage originals permanently; many archives therefore require pencils.
- **No food or drink** in the reading room.
- **Handle originals with care:** keep the pages in their order, never write on top of a file, turn pages with dry fingers; report any damage to the supervisor.

Taking photos: In the state archives of Bavaria, your own photos are permitted at designated places after you have signed a declaration. (F151, F87) In other archives, ask beforehand. You may publish archival images only in accordance with the archive's rules (Section 4.6); digitized images that the state archives themselves show online may, according to the terms of use (as of November 2026), be freely reused; you state the archive and call number. (F40)

Planning your day

Reading old handwriting is more tiring than you might think:

- **In the morning,** the most important things, with a fresh mind.
- **At midday,** a proper break outside the reading room.
- **In the afternoon,** take photos instead of reading, where permitted – you can read at your leisure at home.
- **After two archive days,** a day without the reading room, for example for a walk through your ancestors' home village.

Don't count on more than three or four files per day that you really work through.

6.4 Your Ancestors' Places

Churches: Village churches are often locked outside of services. Write to the Pfarramt (parish office) a few weeks in advance – often someone is happy to unlock it for you.
Cemeteries: Don't expect too much. Graves are reassigned after the resting period expires if no one renews the right of use; graves from the 19th century are therefore rare. Old grave slabs on church walls are worth a look. What you may photograph is governed by the Friedhofssatzung (cemetery regulations) – if in doubt, ask the cemetery administration.
Houses and farms: With your starting sheet from Chapter 7 and the Uraufnahme (original survey) (Chapter 8), you can often find the spot where the farm stood. Whether today's building is the same one, however, cannot be proven by appearance alone.

Heimatvereine (local history societies) and Ortschronisten (local chroniclers) often know which houses were renumbered or who owns an old local chronicle. The municipal administration can give you contacts.
Conversations with locals: Write down what you hear, with the date – as a clue with the degree of certainty "possible" until sources confirm it (Section 5.3).

Taking photos considerately

For your private album, you may photograph many things. If you want to publish pictures, stricter rules apply:

- **Buildings from the outside:** What stands permanently on public streets, paths or squares may be photographed, and the pictures may also be distributed (Panoramafreiheit, freedom of panorama) – but only the exterior view, as any passerby sees it from public ground. Not covered are drone images and photos taken from a neighboring house or someone else's garden; freedom of panorama never applies to interiors. (SQ360, SQ453, SQ454)
- **Private property:** enter only with permission, even if the house once belonged to your ancestors. Frame the shot so that today's residents, name plates and license plates cannot be recognized.
- **People:** publish pictures in which someone can be recognized only with that person's consent. Never photograph mourners in the cemetery. (SQ455)

These notes are not legal advice.

6.5 Documenting on the Road

- **Daily log:** Every evening, enter in your research log (Section 5.6) which files you looked through and to what extent – with and without finds.
- **Name photos right away:** At the start of each file, also photograph its call number, and name the images that same evening (Section 5.4).

- **Back up twice:** Copy the images to a second storage device every evening. A lost phone must not cost you three archive days.

6.6 Practical Matters

Getting there: The Deutschlandticket is valid nationwide on local and regional transport, but not on ICE, IC or EC trains; it costs €63 per month, and from January 1, 2027, €66.80 (as of November 2026). (SQ363) The Lichtenau branch (Außenstelle Lichtenau) of the Staatsarchiv Nürnberg is not in Nuremberg but in the Festung Lichtenau (Lichtenau Fortress), about 10 kilometers east of Ansbach. The nearest train station is Sachsen (bei Ansbach) on the S-Bahn (commuter rail) line S4 Nuremberg–Ansbach; from there it is just under two kilometers on foot. Bus connections are listed in the transport association's timetable information; on weekends, only a few run. (F195, F196)

Accessibility: Ask beforehand about access, elevators and restrooms. At the train station, the railway's Mobilitätsservice (mobility service) can help; it is best to register your needs by 8 p.m. on the day before (as of November 2026). (SQ457)

6.7 Example: Three Days in Upper Franconia (Oberfranken)

The following program is entirely fictitious. Suppose you are searching for the Catholic Schnabel family, who lived in a village near Weismain around 1800. You have already read the baptisms up to 1875 on Matricula (Chapter 2); now it is about the purchase of a farm and entries after 1875. You have requested the birth, marriage and death entries from 1876 onward from the Standesamt (civil registry office) or Stadtarchiv (city archives) (Chapter 3); you found the call numbers online and ordered the files through the virtual reading room.

Day	Morning	Afternoon	Evening
1	Travel; Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg: parish registers (Kirchenbücher) after 1875, as far as the closure periods (Sperrfristen) allow (appointment arranged in advance)	continue in the reading room, note sources	Daily log, name and back up photos
2	Staatsarchiv Bamberg: contract register (Briefprotokoll) with the farm purchase (Chapter 10)	land-tax cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster) and transfer registers (Umschreibhefte) (Chapter 9), photograph pages	Log, backup, plan for tomorrow
3	Home village: visit the church with the parish office	Walk around the village with the Uraufnahme in hand; conversation with the local chronicler	Travel home; evaluate everything at leisure at home

Check the opening days beforehand: the archive of the archdiocese opens only Monday through Wednesday – so start your trip on one of those days.

6.8 Checklist "Travel Bag"

Personalausweis (national ID card)
Application for use (or account in the virtual reading room)
Confirmations of appointments and orders
Call number list, sorted by importance
Notes: family tree extract, open questions, place names, starting sheet for the house
Pencils, sharpener, eraser, notepad
Laptop or tablet with charger
Camera or phone, charged power bank, charging cable

Magnifying glass, reading glasses if needed
USB stick for the evening backup
Coins for lockers
Tickets, accommodation confirmation
Contact details for the parish office, local chronicler, local history society
Comfortable shoes and a jacket for the cemetery and the village walk

When you finally stand in front of the house where your ancestors lived, you will know why the effort was worth it.

Sources for Chapter 6

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026) unless otherwise stated.

- F4 LAELKB, „Benutzung" [Use], https://www.archiv-elkb.de/benutzung – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: advance registration recommended; advance orders by email; private family research €10/day; own photos for private use after a form; inquiries in writing to archiv@elkb.de
- F11 AEB, „Öffnungszeiten" [Opening hours], https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/archivnutzung/Oeffnungszeiten/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Regensburger Ring 2, Bamberg; usually Mon–Wed 8 a.m.–4 p.m.; registration required
- F36 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Nürnberg", https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: renovation until probably 2030; access only by appointment at alternative locations (Lichtenau, Augsburg, Landshut, LAELKB in Nuremberg); notarial records from 1862
- F40 GDA, Nutzungsbedingungen [Terms of use], https://www.gda.bayern.de/en/footer/nutzungsbedingungen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: online digitized images CC0/Public Domain Mark; state the archive and call number; a complimentary copy is requested
- F85 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Kitzingen", https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-kitzingen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F87 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Bamberg", https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-bamberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026

- F88 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Nürnberg“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F150 Bayern.Recht, „Benützungsordnung für die staatlichen Archive Bayerns (ArchivBO), §§ 4, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13“ [Rules of use for the state archives of Bavaria], https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayArchivBO/true – accessed November 2, 2026
- F151 GDA, „Rechtsgrundlagen und Gebühren“ [Legal basis and fees], https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/ueber-uns/Rechtsgrundlagen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F152 GDA, „Faltblatt „Geschützter virtueller Lesesaal“ (22.07.2026)“ [Leaflet “Protected virtual reading room”], https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/aktuelles/faltblatt-gvl-22.7.2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F153 GDA, „Staatsarchiv Bamberg“, https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-bamberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
- F155 Archiv des Erzbistums Bamberg, „Familienforschung“ [Family research], https://archiv.erzbistum-bamberg.de/Familienforschung/ – accessed November 2, 2026
- F188 GDA, Staatsarchiv Kitzingen, https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-kitzingen/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: trial operation after move 02/2026; access only with advance registration; closure of all state archives over the turn of the year 2026/27; no statement on genealogical inquiries
- F195 GDA, Staatsarchiv Nürnberg (as F88/F36), https://www.gda.bayern.de/de/archives/staatsarchiv-nuernberg/index.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: four off-site storage locations (Lichtenau near Ansbach, Augsburg, Landshut, LAELKB); closure Oct./Nov. 2026; Rollnerstraße offices only; no directions; closure 25.12.2026–05.01.2027
- F196 VGN, hiking leaflet „Festungsmauern und Residenzschlösser“ [Fortress walls and residential palaces], https://m.vgn.de/wandern/festungsmauern_residenzschloesser.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: S4 Nuremberg–Sachsen (b. Ansbach) station several times per hour; Festung Lichtenau as branch of the Staatsarchiv Nürnberg; bus Mon–Sat, Sun shared on-call taxi (Anrufsammeltaxi)
- F199 GDA, Rechtsgrundlagen (as F151), section „Archivalien sind Einzelstücke“ [Archival records are unique items] – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: the ban on „allgemeiner Bestellungen … nach thematischen Bereichen“ [general orders … by subject area] refers to reproduction orders
- SQ360 https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/urhg/__59.html (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: § 59 UrhG (German Copyright Act; works in public places): para. 1 works permanently located on public paths, streets or squares may, among other things, be reproduced by photograph, distributed and communicated to the public; for buildings only the exterior view; para. 2 no reproduction on a building

- SQ363 https://regional.bahn.de/tickets/Deutschlandticket (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: DB Regio, „Deutschlandticket“: €63 per month until December 31, 2026, from January 1, 2027 €66.80; valid on buses, subways (U-Bahn), S-Bahn, regional transport, not on IC/EC/ICE; subscription only, cancellation by the 10th of the month
- SQ453 https://www.lto.de/recht/hintergruende/h/bgh-i-zr67-23-panoramafreiheit-drohne-perspektive-menschliches-auge; https://www.roedl.com/insights/urheberrecht-bhg-drohne-luftbildaufnahmen-unzulaessig/ (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: BGH (Federal Court of Justice), judgment of October 23, 2024, I ZR 67/23 (drone photos), according to the LTO report: freedom of panorama only for perspectives that people can take from generally accessible places; drone photos not covered; observation towers/public bodies of water still permissible according to OLG Hamm. Ladders not addressed in the report. Supplemented by Rödl & Partner, 23.10.2024
- SQ454 https://lexetius.com/2003,2286 (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: BGH, judgment of June 5, 2003, I ZR 192/00 (Hundertwasser House), paras. 23, 26, 27: only photos „von den öffentlichen Wegen, Straßen und Plätzen aus“ [from the public paths, streets and squares]; a view from a place inaccessible to the general public (private apartment opposite) not covered. Aids such as ladders not mentioned → in the text “not clearly settled”
- SQ455 https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/kunsturhg/__22.html (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: § 22 Kunsturhebergesetz (KUG, German Art Copyright Act): portraits may be distributed or publicly displayed only with the consent of the person depicted; after death, for 10 years consent of the relatives (exceptions under § 23 not evaluated)
- SQ457 https://www.bahn.de/handicap (accessed November 1, 2026) (source from the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“)
  Supports: Deutsche Bahn, „Barrierefrei reisen“ [Barrier-free travel] (bahn.de/handicap): registration of assistance with the Mobilitätsservice-Zentrale (mobility service center) recommended „bis spätestens 20 Uhr am Vortag der Reise“ [by 8 p.m. on the day before the journey at the latest]; abroad 24 hours’ notice; online (msz.bahnhof.de, around the clock), phone 030 65212888 (Mon–Fri 6 a.m.–10 p.m., Sat/Sun/holiday 8 a.m.–8 p.m.), email. bahnhof.de gives no deadline (Q364)

Part II · Researching Houses and Farms

Chapter 7

From Today's House to the Old House Number

Many family histories in Franconia (Franken) begin not with a name but with a house: the grandparents' farm, the shop in the old town, a house you have bought and whose history you would like to know. The house is an excellent guide. It stays in the same spot while people come and go – and since the early 19th century, the authorities have described, surveyed and taxed it again and again. (F25, F58)

Part II takes you backward step by step: from today's property via the old house numbers, maps and cadastral records (Kataster) to the contracts before 1800 and to the Grundherren (feudal landlords) who owned the land at the time (Chapter 10) – and then back to the people who lived in the house.

7.1 Sort First: What Do Your Own Documents Really Say?

If you own or inherit a house, you often already have a pile of paper: purchase contract, Grundbuchauszug (land register extract), site plans, building permits, old photos, perhaps a sales listing or the return for the building census (Gebäudezählung). Before you go to the archive, sort these documents according to a single question: **Who wrote this down, when, and on what basis?**

Document	What it shows	What it does not show
Land register extract (Grundbuchauszug), purchase contract	Ownership from a certain date, parcel number (Flurstücksnummer), area	a year of construction

Document	What it shows	What it does not show
Site plan, cadastral map (Flurkarte)	Location and outline at a point in time	that exactly this building already stood at that time
Building plan, building permit	that something was planned or permitted	that it was built that way
Sales listing, property brochure (Exposé)	The seller's statements	verified facts
Return for the building census	the owner's or property management's statement of the year of construction – in the 2022 census (Zensus 2022), those required to respond answered the questions themselves, online or on paper (F138)	a documented year of construction
Old photos, postcards	Appearance at an (often estimated) time	an exact date, if none is written on it

The most important rule of house research: A date of acquisition is not a date of construction, and a plan is not yet a building. If the cadastral records say „gekauft 1812" (purchased 1812), you only know that the house already existed in 1812 – not when it was built.

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** A year of construction in your own documents – for example in a return for the building census or in a sales listing – is usually an estimate that someone entered at some point. If it cannot be documented, what counts is the earliest source that reliably names the house, for example a purchase contract referred to in the cadastral records. And even that only says: the house already stood at that time.

7.2 Today's Property: the Parcel Number

The fixed anchor of all house research is the **Flurstück** (land parcel) – the surveyed plot with its number in a **Gemarkung** (cadastral district) – that is the name of the surveyed district into which a place's parcels are divided; it often corresponds to the territory of a former municipality, because cadastral districts usually remain unchanged when municipalities are merged. (F221) The number appears in the land register extract and on the cadastral map; in the free BayernAtlas, you can search by cadastral district and parcel number and see the parcel boundaries with the Parzellarkarte (parcel map) – a simplified cadastral map. The official cadastral map, current to the day, is available in the paid BayernAtlas-plus or as an extract from the Amt für Digitalisierung, Breitband und Vermessung (Office for Digitization, Broadband and Surveying). (F204, F205) Write down the cadastral district and parcel number – with them, you can find the property again in old cadastral records and on old maps (Chapters 8 and 9).
Caution: Parcels are divided, merged and renumbered. An old **plot number** (Plannummer) – as the parcel number was called in the first Bavarian cadastral records (Chapter 8) – may have become several of today's parcels, or vice versa. So always check the neighboring properties as well (Chapter 13).

7.3 House Numbers: the Same Door, Many Numbers

In the past, houses in many places did not have street names with numbers but a consecutive number for the whole village or town. These numbers were changed over time – often several times, for example when new houses were added or street names were introduced. In Bavaria, the tax house numbers (Steuer-Hausnummern) came with the tax cadastre (Steuerkataster) of 1808; new houses received the next higher number, divided houses fractional numbers such as ½. In the countryside, street names often did not appear until the 20th century. (F94) Some towns had numbers earlier, such as Bayreuth (first numbers around 1770, consecutive town-wide numbering from 1777, numbers per street only in 1889) and Nuremberg from 1796 – there separately for the Sebald and the Lorenz sides of the city (Sebalder and Lorenzer Stadtseite); in Nuremberg, numbering by street was introduced

only in 1865/67. (F121, F201, F122) One and the same house can therefore have a different number in the 19th century than around 1900, and a street address today.

How to find the old numbers: 1. **Cadastral records and transfer registers (Umschreibhefte):** They often expressly note changes of house number, for example with a sentence such as „bisher Haus-Nr. 23, nun Nr. 41" (formerly house no. 23, now no. 41) (fictitious example; Chapter 9). Note: in the oldest Umschreibebuch (transfer book), you search by the Besitznummer (property number); in the later transfer registers, by house number. (F94) Also be prepared for a number having been reassigned after a demolition. 2. **Concordance lists (Schlüssellisten):** Local history books (Heimatbücher) and local chronicles (Ortschroniken) sometimes contain tables of old and new numbers. Check which period and which streets such a list covers. 3. **Parish registers (Kirchenbücher):** Since the 19th century, many registers also give the house number with the place of residence. From when on varies from parish to parish – page back until the number is missing (Chapter 11). (F203) 4. **Address books (Adressbücher)** of larger towns often list the residents of each house, some also the owners. (F82, F201)

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** (numbers fictitious) In the 19th century, a house bears a consecutive village number – say no. 57 –, after a renumbering no. 30, and today a street address. The connection is most reliably documented with two sources: a note in the transfer register of the cadastral records („nun Haus Nr. 30", now house no. 30) and a more recent contract that equates no. 30 with today's address. If a single entry seems to give the new number years too early, read it again: often it is a reading error.

7.4 Your Starting Sheet

At the beginning, record on one sheet (template in Chapter 15.7):

- today's address, cadastral district, parcel number(s)
- all known old house numbers with period and documentation
- your own documents with date and what they document

- first question: What do you want to know – owners, residents, age of the building, appearance?

Take this sheet with you into the next chapters.

Sources for Chapter 7

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“ [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026) unless otherwise stated.

- F25 J. Wild, „Anleitung zur Familienforschung in Bayern“ [Guide to family research in Bavaria], GDA, as of 05/2001, https://www.gda.bayern.de/fileadmin/user_upload/Medien_fuer_Ausbildung_Qualifizierung/famfor.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: civil registry offices (Standesämter) in Bavaria from January 1, 1876; duplicate parish registers (Pfarrmatrikel-Zweitschriften) occasionally from 1803, regularly approx. 1825–1875, mostly in state archives; types of records (Briefprotokolle, Grundsteuerkataster from 1808, Ansässigmachung/Verehelichung [permission to settle/marry] from 1825, Heimatakten [domicile files], Konskription [conscription]); Kriegsarchiv (War Archives)
- F58 LDBV, leaflet „Historische Karten“ [Historical maps], https://www.ldbv.bayern.de/mam/ldbv/dateien/faltblatt_historischekarten.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Uraufnahme 1808–1864 for the land-tax cadastre, approx. 23,000 sheets, village sheets 1:2,500; Positionsblätter (topographic sheets) 1:25,000; PDF extracts in the BayernAtlas free of charge
- F82 Stadtarchiv Nürnberg, „Familienforschung“ [Family research], https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/stadtarchiv/service_auskunft_familienforschung.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: address books 1792–2002 (with gaps); duplicate parish registers (C 21/II)
- F94 Bayerischer Landesverein für Familienkunde, „Das bayerische Grundsteuerkataster (Vortrag C. Heigl, 16.02.2022)“ [The Bavarian land-tax cadastre (lecture)], https://www.blf-online.de/sites/default/files/blf_termine_dateien/2022-02-15_grundsteuerkataster.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F121 Stadtarchiv Bayreuth, „Hausnummernverzeichnis von 1783 (Hilfsmittel)“ [House number register of 1783 (finding aid)], https://www.bayreuth.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Hausnummernverzeichnis-von-1783.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F122 Stadt Nürnberg, Amt für Stadtforschung und Statistik, „Hausnummern 1796“ [House numbers 1796], https://www.nuernberg.de/internet/statistik/hausnummern_1796.html – accessed November 2, 2026

- F138 Bayerisches Landesamt für Statistik, „Bayern in Zahlen 04/2022 – Zensus 2022“, https://www.statistischebibliothek.de/mir/servlets/MCRFileNodeServlet/BYMonografie_derivate_00001101/2022-04_50-zensus-2022.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F201 R.-M. Kiel (ed.), „Bayreuther Hausnummern-, Adreß- und Einwohnerbücher 1807–1937“ [Bayreuth house number, address and resident books 1807–1937], Universitätsbibliothek Bayreuth 2007, https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/715/1/einwohnerbuecher.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: first numbering probably 1770 (fire insurance, ordinance of June 14, 1770); 1807/08 first house number books; 1889 by street, even numbers on the right/odd on the left; 30 volumes 1807–1937
- F203 P. Pfister (ed.), „Leben Lieben Sterben. 450 Jahre Pfarrmatrikeln“ [Living, Loving, Dying. 450 Years of Parish Registers], Kataloge des Archivs des Erzbistums München und Freising 13, 2014, https://www2.erzbistum-muenchen.de/cms-media/media-51171320.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Electoral Bavarian ordinance of 1803: parish registers according to uniform forms; printed forms not introduced everywhere immediately; house number in the family book form of 1845 and in vaccination lists
- F204 BayernPortal, „BayernAtlas; Kartenviewer des Freistaates Bayern“ [map viewer of the Free State of Bavaria] (as of May 29, 2026), https://www.bayernportal.de/dokumente/leistung/5888731340 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: free map viewer (current and historical maps); cadastral map current to the day only in the paid BayernAtlas-plus
- F205 Bayerische Vermessungsverwaltung/Grundsteuer Bayern, script for the video „BayernAtlas Beta“, https://grst.bayern.de/pdf/Sprechtext_zum_Video_BayernAtlas-Beta.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: search by cadastral district and parcel number; parcel boundaries via „Luftbild mit Parzellarkarte“ [aerial photo with parcel map]
- F221 Announcement „Verfahren bei Änderungen in der Benennung, im Bestand und in der Begrenzung der Gemarkungen (GmkgÄndBek)“ [Procedure for changes in the naming, composition and boundaries of cadastral districts] of September 19, 2006, FMBl. S. 183, Nr. 2.2 and 3.2, https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayVwV151715 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: when the composition of municipalities changes, cadastral districts usually remain unchanged; where cadastral district and municipal boundaries coincide, this is to be preserved

Chapter 8

Reading Maps and Site Plans

An old map shows where a house stood, how the property was laid out, and who the neighbors were. It is often the first picture you get of "your" house in earlier times. This chapter explains which maps exist in Bavaria, where to find them, and what they prove – and what they don't.

8.1 The Uraufnahme: Bavaria House by House

Between 1808 and 1864, all of Bavaria was surveyed for the land tax (Grundsteuer). (F92, F93) The result is the **Uraufnahme** (original survey): more than 24,000 map sheets, about 21,000 cadastral maps (Flurkarten) and some 3,000 village and town sheets (Orts- und Stadtblätter). The open fields are drawn at a scale of 1:5,000, the built-up village area at 1:2,500; in Franconia (Franken) there are some even more detailed sheets. (F93) The Coburg area (Coburger Land) was not yet part of Bavaria at that time; different records apply there (Chapter 1).

Reading tip: On the sheets, the **house numbers are in red** and the **plot or parcel numbers (Plannummern / Flurnummern) are in black**. (F94) With the plot number you can find the property again in the cadastral records (Kataster) (Chapter 9); with the house number, in parish registers (Kirchenbücher) and address books (Adressbücher) (Chapter 11).

Terminology trap: „Positionsblätter" (position sheets) are not the cadastral maps, but topographic maps at a scale of 1:25,000, which were produced up to 1841 and only became publicly available from 1872. They are too coarse for individual houses. (F92)

8.2 Where to Find the Maps

- **BayernAtlas** (the Bavarian state's online map viewer): Here you can view the Uraufnahme and the Positionsblätter free of charge online and create extracts as PDFs. (F92) Lay the old map over today's cadastral map (Flurkarte): this shows you whether boundaries and buildings are still in the same place.
- **Reproductions and data:** Printed extracts and raster data are available for a fee from the surveying administration (Vermessungsverwaltung) or its sales partners. (F93)
- **Ämter für Digitalisierung, Breitband und Vermessung** (Offices for Digitization, Broadband and Surveying; formerly Vermessungsämter, surveying offices) and **Staatsarchive** (state archives): They hold older versions and updated editions (Fortführungen) of the maps (Chapter 9). (F94, F97)
- **Plans in building and land records:** More recent building and site plans are often found in the building files (Bauakten), sometimes also in the land registry files (Grundakten) (Chapters 9 and 12). (F105, F124)
- **Town plans and views of towns and villages:** Municipal archives (Stadtarchive), local history societies (Heimatvereine) and libraries often have printed plans from the 19th and 20th centuries – ask.

Rights: If you want to publish map excerpts, for example in a house history (Hauschronik) or online, clarify the terms of use beforehand. The open data of the surveying administration is licensed under CC BY 4.0 and must be credited with „Bayerische Vermessungsverwaltung – www.geodaten.bayern.de". Whether the Uraufnahme is part of this open data is not clearly stated – the notes refer only in general terms to „bestimmten historischen Karten" (certain historical maps) (as of November 2026); if in doubt, ask. (F98, F99) For a printed house history, the safest route is an excerpt from the OpenData offering with a source credit, or a sketch you draw yourself.

8.3 Dating a Map

Every map has a date – but often not the one printed on it. A sheet may have been surveyed, later updated, and printed later still. So for every map, note: 1. **What is the sheet?** Title, sheet number, scale, **Steuergemeinde** (tax district – the district for which the cadastral records were created). 2. **When was it surveyed, when was it updated?** Many sheets were kept up to date over decades; new buildings were drawn in. 3. **Which version are you looking at?** The online display may show a later update. 4. **Source citation (Fundstelle):** portal or archive, call number (Signatur), date accessed (Chapter 5).
The Steuerdistrikte (fiscal districts) of 1808 and the Steuergemeinden (tax districts) do not always match later municipalities. (F94) So search under the name of the Steuergemeinde as it was at the time.

8.4 What a Map Proves – and What It Doesn't

A map shows …	… but not
that a building is drawn in at a particular spot	when it was built
outline and position at the time of the survey or the update	whether it is the same building as today
property boundaries and neighbors	who lived there
the house and plot number at that time	the numbers before and after

The map rule: A building on a map means "stood no later than the date of this sheet." If it is missing from an older map, that only means "not yet drawn in." No year of construction follows from this.

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** (numbers invented) On the village sheet of the Uraufnahme, the house you are looking for appears with the red number 57 on plot number 312. On a more recent sheet, the property is divided (312½ and 313), and an extension has been added. This shows a change between two maps – exactly when the alterations were made can only be determined

> from the cadastral records, building files, or tree-ring dating of the timber (Chapters 9 and 12).

8.5 Laying Old over New

Lay the Uraufnahme over today's map, in the BayernAtlas or with tracings on paper. Pay attention to:

- **fixed points:** church, street corners, bridges, streams;
- **property boundaries:** they often outlast the buildings;
- **shifts:** old maps have small positional errors; an offset of a few meters does not yet mean a new building.

The result is a sentence such as: "The property corresponds in position and boundaries to plot number 312 of the Uraufnahme; the main building stands in the same place." Take this plot number with you to Chapter 9.

Sources for Chapter 8

The abbreviations F1, F2 … in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ… refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless stated otherwise.

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- F105 Bayer. Staatsministerium der Justiz, „Amtsgericht Nürnberg – Grundbuchamt“ [Nuremberg Local Court – Land Registry Office], https://www.justiz.bayern.de/gerichte-und-behoerden/amtsgerichte/nuernberg/verfahren_09.php – accessed November 2, 2026
- F124 BayernPortal / FIM (freigegeben vom StMB), „Bauakten; Beantragung der Einsichtnahme“ [Building Files; Applying for Inspection], https://fimportal.de/api/vo/xzufi-services/L100042/55424/de/pdf – accessed November 2, 2026

Chapter 9

Kataster and Grundbuch – the Chain of Ownership

With the cadastral records (Kataster) and the land register (Grundbuch), you can trace who owned a house – owner by owner, often without gaps from the early 19th century to the present day. This chapter shows how the books are connected and where they are kept today.

9.1 The Bavarian Land-Tax Cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster)

The survey (Chapter 8) was followed by the **Liquidation**: the official determination of who owned which parcel of land. In the process, the owners confirmed their holdings; from 1830 separate **Liquidationsprotokolle** (liquidation records) were created for this purpose, and from 1840 the owners signed directly in the Kataster. From this, the **Grundsteuerkataster** (land-tax cadastre) was compiled. Changes of ownership were then entered in **Umschreibhefte** (transfer registers) – separate volumes for specific periods, such as 1843–1859, 1859–1893 and 1893–1960. Later, **renovierte Kataster** (renovated/revised registers) were added. The exact years differ from one tax district (Steuergemeinde) to the next. (F94)

What's in it? For each property: house and plot numbers (Haus- und Plannummern), buildings and areas, the owner and often how he acquired the property – for example by purchase, exchange or takeover, sometimes with a reference to the contract („laut Brief vom …“, "according to the deed of …"). This way the Kataster leads you back to older contracts (Chapter 10). (F94)

Reading tips:

- In the oldest transfer book (Umschreibebuch) (in the lecture's example 1814–1843, kept chronologically), you search by the **Besitznum-**

mer (property number), not by the house number; in the later Umschreibhefte, each house number is kept separately. The property number and the house number are often different, and property numbers often later became new house numbers. (F94)

- Areas are given in **Tagwerk** (a Bavarian unit of land area, literally "a day's work"): 1 Tagwerk equals 0.340727 hectares. (F94)
- If an estate was divided, the separated part received a fractional number, such as 14½ or 14⅓. (F94)

9.2 What Is Kept Where?

Record	usually found at	Note
Uraufnahme, Liquidationsprotokolle	Ämter für Digitalisierung, Breitband und Vermessung (Offices for Digitization, Broadband and Surveying), in some cases Staatsarchiv (state archives) (F95)	as a rule may not be discarded there (F97); fees vary, ask beforehand (F96)
Grundsteuerkataster, Umschreibhefte	Staatsarchiv of the Regierungsbezirk (administrative district)	record group (Bestand) „Kataster" or Rentamt/Finanzamt (tax office) (F94, F95)
Hypothekenbücher (mortgage books), old Grundbücher	Grundbuchamt (land registry office) or Staatsarchiv	whereabouts differ by Amtsgericht (local court) – ask the Staatsarchiv (F87, F110)
today's Grundbuch, Grundakten (land registry files)	Grundbuchamt at the Amtsgericht	access only with a legitimate interest (9.4)

Which Staatsarchiv is responsible for your place and what changed in Kitzingen and Nuremberg in 2026 is explained in Chapter 1.5.

For family history and local history purposes – which as a rule also includes the history of a house – use of the state archives is free of charge; copies and digitized images (Digitalisate) are subject to fees. (F89, F90) Parts of the holdings of the Staatsarchiv Bamberg, including Grundbücher, are kept at the Staatsarchiv Coburg. (F87)
Tip: Before visiting the Staatsarchiv and the surveying office (Vermessungsamt), call and ask which Kataster volumes for your Steuergemeinde are kept where. (F97)

9.3 From Hypothekenbuch to Grundbuch

In Bavaria, the **Hypothekengesetz** (Mortgage Act) of June 1, 1822, came into force on June 1, 1826; this gave rise to the **Hypothekenbücher** (mortgage books). After the German Civil Code (Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, 1900) came into force, the Grundbuch was set up: it was established in **Middle and Upper Franconia (Mittel- und Oberfranken) in 1909** and in **Lower Franconia (Unterfranken) in 1910**, and in Coburg, which was not yet Bavarian at the time, in 1900; the setting up was completed throughout Bavaria on October 1, 1910. (F108) In the Grundbuch, the parcels are identified by their Flur- or Plannummern (parcel or plot numbers) – so the plot number leads from the Kataster to the Grundbuch and back.

9.4 Access to the Grundbuch

Anyone who demonstrates a **berechtigtes Interesse** (legitimate interest) may inspect the Grundbuch; the same applies to the documents referred to in the Grundbuch and to the other **Grundakten** (land registry files). (F102, F183) Mere curiosity is not enough, nor is a general interest in information. There is **no explicit special rule** for family and local history research. (F103)
In practice this means:

- **Owners** and persons **authorized** by them may always inspect. If you are researching someone else's house, ask the owners for a written **letter of authorization (Vollmacht)**. (F104)

- You submit requests in person, in writing with a copy of your ID, or online via the BayernPortal; requests by telephone are not possible; whether an e-mail is sufficient differs from one Amtsgericht to another – ask beforehand. (F104, F105, F106)
- **Inspection** is free of charge. A simple printout costs €10, an official printout €20 (as of November 2026). (F104, F107)
- The courts **warn against private internet portals** that arrange Grundbuch extracts at high markups. Contact the Grundbuchamt directly. (F104, F106)

Grundakten are often more productive than the Grundbuch itself: they contain purchase contracts, notarial deeds and sometimes plans. Some land registry offices require a written advance order stating the Gemarkung (cadastral district) and the folio number (Blattnummer). (F105) Old, closed Grundbücher that have been transferred to a Staatsarchiv are used there according to the archive's rules. (F111, F87)
These notes do not replace legal advice. What counts as a legitimate interest is decided by the Grundbuchamt on a case-by-case basis. (F103)

9.5 Building the Chain of Ownership

1. **Backward from the Grundbuch:** today's folio → earlier folios → setting up in 1909/1910 with plot number.
2. **With the plot number into the Kataster:** last Umschreibheft volume → earlier volumes → Grundsteuerkataster → Liquidation.
3. **For each change of ownership, note:** date, type (purchase, handover [Übergabe], inheritance, exchange), previous and new owner, source citation (Fundstelle).
4. **Let the record name the contract:** If it says „laut Kaufbrief vom …" ("according to the deed of sale of …"), look for the contract in Briefprotokolle (contract registers) or notarial records (Chapter 10).

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** (numbers invented) When it was set up, the Grundbuch names plot numbers 312½ and 313. The last Umschreibheft

> lists them under house number 57, as does the Uraufnahme. In the Grundsteuerkataster, the entry for the first owner reads: „erworben durch Kauf laut Kaufbrief von 1797“ (“acquired by purchase according to the deed of sale of 1797”). This takes the chain of ownership back to the purchase of 1797. The purchase is only documented once you have read the deed of sale itself – that is the next step at the Staatsarchiv.

The most important rule still applies: Acquiring a house is not the same as building it. The Kataster documents that the house already stood at the time of the first entry – nothing more.

Sources for Chapter 9

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“ [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless stated otherwise.

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Chapter 10

Before the Kataster – Briefprotokolle, Salbücher, Grundherrschaft

The cadastral records (Kataster) go back to the first decades of the 19th century. Before that, you have to follow the trail through contracts and the books of the manorial lords (Grundherren). This is more laborious, but in Franconia (Franken) it is often surprisingly productive.

10.1 Who Owned the Land? Manorial Lordship (Grundherrschaft) in Franconia

The **Grundherr** (manorial lord) was whoever held the superior ownership (Obereigentum) of the land of a farm or house. The peasants held the beneficial ownership (Nutzeigentum): they worked the farm, but were allowed to sell it only with the consent of the manorial lord, and paid him dues for it every year. (F115) Before 1800, Franconia was a patchwork. The prince-bishoprics (Hochstifte) of Bamberg, Würzburg and Eichstätt, the margraviates (Markgraftümer) of Ansbach and Bayreuth, imperial cities (Reichsstädte) such as Nuremberg and Schweinfurt, the imperial knighthood (Reichsritterschaft), the Teutonic Order (Deutscher Orden) and monasteries held rights of lordship – often side by side in one and the same village. (F85, F87, F88, F175) For you, this means: the records on a house may be kept in **several archives**, including archives of noble families (Adelsarchive).
First step: Find out who the manorial lord of your house was in the 18th century. Clues come from the Kataster (Chapter 9), the **Historischer Atlas**

von Bayern (Historical Atlas of Bavaria) (Chapter 2) and local literature. The manorial lord determines which archive you search in.

10.2 Briefprotokolle: the Contracts Before 1862

Briefprotokolle (contract registers) are books in which courts and offices recorded the contracts of their subjects: purchases, handovers to the children, marriage contracts, exchanges, debts. They originated in the 16th century; they have mostly survived from the end of the Thirty Years' War, in continuous series mostly from about 1700. In **1862** they were replaced by **Notariatsurkunden** (notarial records). The Generaldirektion der Staatlichen Archive Bayerns (General Directorate of the State Archives of Bavaria) recommends evaluating the Briefprotokolle **first** for house research. (F109) In Franconia, such books often have different names depending on the lordship; the finding aid (Findbuch) of the Staatsarchiv (state archives) gives the respective designation.

Notariatsurkunden from 1862 onward are kept in the Staatsarchive: for Upper and Lower Franconia (Ober- und Unterfranken) – the district of the Higher Regional Court of Bamberg (OLG-Bezirk Bamberg) – in the Staatsarchiv Kitzingen, so even for Upper Franconia not in the Staatsarchiv Bamberg; for Middle Franconia (Mittelfranken) in the Staatsarchiv Nürnberg (Nuremberg State Archives). (F85, F88)

How to proceed: 1. Take the date of acquisition from the Kataster („Kaufbrief vom …", "deed of sale of …"). 2. Determine the court or office responsible at that time (manorial lord, Chapter 10.1). 3. Look up the volume for that year in the finding aid of the Staatsarchiv. Some of the finding aids are available in the virtual reading room (virtueller Lesesaal). (F91) 4. Read the contract: it names the seller, the buyer, the price, often the previous owners and sometimes the condition of the house. 5. Use the seller's name to go further back: when did he acquire the house?

10.3 Salbücher, Urbare, Lehenbücher

- **Salbücher** and **Urbare** (registers of manorial holdings) list the property and rights of a manorial lord: which houses and estates owed him dues and what each one had to pay. (F109)
- **Stift- und Gültregister** (registers of annual dues) record the annual dues of the Grundholden, that is, the owners liable to pay dues. (F109) If they have survived over many years, you can trace changes of ownership in them.
- **Lehenbücher** (fief books) record fiefs and enfeoffments; when ownership changed, the fief had to be received anew. (F109)

Examples show how far back this goes: the fief court registry (Lehenhof-Registratur) of the Hochstift Bamberg begins in 1398, and the Lehenbücher of the Hochstift Eichstätt run from 1322 to 1789. (F112, F113) Not everything has been indexed online; some holdings are accessible only through printed or handwritten finding aids. (F114)
Older **tax registers of the prince-bishoprics (Steuerkataster der Hochstifte)** also exist – for example for an office (Amt) of Bamberg from 1733, arranged by place and listing property and tax. (F101)

10.4 The Emancipation of the Peasants (Bauernbefreiung) of 1848

With the law of **June 4, 1848**, manorial lordship in the old sense came to an end in Bavaria. Some burdens were abolished without compensation; the rest were combined into **Bodenzinsen** (ground rents) – a fixed annual payment in place of the old dues – which could be redeemed but did not have to be. Many continued to pay the Bodenzins; it was only abolished entirely on **May 21, 1920**. (F115) In 1848 the peasants became owners of their farms. (F94, F115)
For your research: Files on Bodenzins and redemption (Ablösung) can extend into the 20th century and often name the owners and the former manorial lord.

10.5 Fire Insurance: Buildings with a Value

The **Allgemeine Brandversicherungsanstalt** (General Fire Insurance Institution) was founded in Bavaria in 1811. (F117) After that, fire insurance books (Brandversicherungsbücher) were set up in the municipalities; buildings were assessed according to type of construction and location. (F117) If the insured value changes significantly, this may point to an alteration or a new building – a clue, not proof. Damage files (Schadensakten) show fires and the rebuilding. In Franconia, there are assessment records from as early as 1811, for example on the Ansbach fire insurance (Ansbacher Brand-Assekuration) (F180), and even older tables of buildings and owners from 1804 to 1807 on joining the electoral Bamberg fire insurance society (kurfürstlich bambergische Brandversicherungsgesellschaft). (F118)
Where to look? The surviving records are scattered: in municipal and city archives (Gemeinde- und Stadtarchive), in the Staatsarchive and in the archives of lordships (Herrschaftsarchive). (F117, F118, F119) Ask first at the municipal or city archives and at the Staatsarchiv.

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** (details invented) The land-tax cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster) gives the acquisition as „Kaufbrief 1797“ (“deed of sale 1797”). The Briefprotokoll of the responsible office for 1797 contains the purchase; the seller had taken over the house from his father in 1769. In the manorial lord’s Gültregister, the same property appears every year from 1760 to 1800 with the same dues – and in 1786 with a new owner’s name that does not appear in any contract. Here it pays to search the parish register (Kirchenbuch): was it a son-in-law?

10.6 Reading and Understanding

Briefprotokolle and Salbücher are usually written in Kurrent script (old German handwriting) and are full of set phrases. The advice from Chapter 4 applies here in particular: note the source citation (Fundstelle) first, transcribe word for word, mark uncertain readings, use AI only as a reading aid, and check every name and every number against the original.

Sources for Chapter 10

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden“ [Finding Ancestors in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless stated otherwise.

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Chapter 11

Who Lived in the House? Owners, Tenants, Neighbors

The cadastral records (Kataster) and the land register (Grundbuch) name the **owners**. But often more people lived in a house: children and grandparents, farmhands and maids, tenants, retired farmers (Altbauern) and widows living on a retirement settlement (im Austrag). To find them, you connect the house number with sources about people.

11.1 Parish Registers (Kirchenbücher) with House Numbers

From 1803, Bavaria prescribed uniform, tabular forms for the parish registers; in Franconia (Franken) this only applied after the transfer to Bavaria, and not every parish (Pfarrei) switched over immediately. (F203) Since then, many books also give the house number along with the place of residence – from when on differs from parish to parish; check this with a sample in your parish. Then you can search a parish register "by house": you go through the entries page by page and note every entry with your house number.
How to proceed: 1. **Determine the starting point:** Page back until the house number column is missing. Before that point, no entry can be assigned to a house. 2. **All books, all years:** Go through baptisms, marriages and burials separately – not only the years in which you suspect "your" family was there. It is precisely the entries with unfamiliar names that reveal tenants and subtenants. 3. **Watch for number changes:** From the renumbering onward, continue searching with the new number (Chapter 7.3). 4. **Record the scope:** "Sterbebuch (burial register) 1861–1890, all pages, No. 57: 7 entries" (example) is a result – even if it says "no entries" (Chapter 5.6).

Typical case (Typischer Fall) The house number column does not begin at the same time in all the books of a parish – in the baptismal register (Taufbuch) it may appear years earlier than in the marriage register (Traungsbuch). A systematic search of all the books for one house number usually reveals more than the owner's family: tenant households, servants and transients as well. And it clears up family traditions, for example when a child who supposedly "died very young" was, according to the burial register, already several years old.

11.2 After 1876: Standesamt and Melderegister

From 1876, the registers of the civil registry office (Standesamt) give the place of residence of the persons involved; the civil registrar (Standesbeamter) often also added the street or house number, but this was not required. (F25, F202) Where the registers are kept today is explained in Chapters 1.2 and 3.2. Residents' registration records (Melderegister) and resident card indexes (Einwohnerkarteien) survive in city archives (Stadtarchive) – in some cases only as information provided on request, in some cases not at all. In Nuremberg, for example, the Stadtarchiv releases Melderegister only in the form of information on request; in Bayreuth, the registration records from before 1945 were destroyed in April 1945. (F82, F163, F52)

11.3 Address Books (Adressbücher)

Address books of larger towns list the residents by street and house number, often with occupation, sometimes with the note „Eigentümer" (owner). (F82, F71, F201) Compare several years: this shows you when someone moved in and out. Smaller places rarely have their own address books; search the address book database of GenWiki and the catalog of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library) for volumes covering the whole district.

11.4 Newspapers and Official Gazettes (Amtsblätter)

Newspapers and official gazettes contain house sales, auctions, business openings and death notices – often with the house number. Search digiPress (the Bavarian State Library's digitized newspaper portal) with the house number and place name, with the names of the owners and with their trade. (F56, F57) digiPress mostly goes up to the 1920s; for later periods, ask the Stadtarchiv for bound newspaper volumes.

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** A newspaper advertisement announces the sale of a house „im Ort" ("in the village"), without a house number. Whether it is the house you are looking for remains open ("possible"). Note such finds with their degree of certainty and look for a second, independent source.

11.5 Trades in the House

A craft or shop leaves its own traces: trade license files (Gewerbekonzessionsakten) (from 1825; they are frequently connected with marriage and the permission to settle [Ansässigmachung], and depending on the authority are kept in the Staatsarchiv [state archives] or the Stadtarchiv), shop signs on old photos, advertisements, club chronicles. (F25) Trade data, however, is often data about a **business**, not a house – a founding year does not yet document that the business started in this house.

11.6 The Neighbors as a Cross-Check

If you are unsure whether a number really belongs to your house, check the neighboring houses too: do the numbers follow one another without gaps? Do the neighbors match up in the Kataster, the map and the parish register? More on this in Chapter 13.

11.7 Data Protection

Residents who are still alive or who died only recently do not belong in a published house history. Keep more recent names in your private file; pub-

lish only what lies far back in time, and if in doubt only with the consent of the families (Chapter 5.4).

Sources for Chapter 11

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Chapter 12

The Building Itself – Building Files, Plans, Pictures

The cadastral records (Kataster) and contracts tell you who owned a house. How it was built and altered is shown by other sources: building files (Bauakten) and plans, old photos – and the house itself.

12.1 Building Files: Where and for Whom

The authority responsible for building permits is the **untere Bauaufsichtsbehörde** (lower building supervisory authority): the district office (Landratsamt), an independent city (kreisfreie Stadt), a major district town (Große Kreisstadt) or a municipality to which this task has been delegated. (F124) **Who may inspect them?** During the proceedings, the building owners (Bauherren) and the neighbors involved, as well as persons authorized by them. Others can apply to the authority for information if they credibly demonstrate a legitimate interest (berechtigtes Interesse); the authority weighs this against the interests of the current owners and can refuse. (F124, F207) For someone else's house, you will therefore usually only get further with a letter of authorization (Vollmacht) from the owners. Inspection and copies are subject to fees. (F124, F125) These notes do not replace legal advice. **Old building files** are often no longer at the building office (Bauamt):

- Some district offices have transferred older files to the **Staatsarchiv** (state archives) – the Landratsamt München, for example, most files from before 1998. (F125) For Upper Franconia (Oberfranken), the Staatsarchiv Bamberg stores building permit files (Baugenehmigungsakten) of the district offices in an off-site depot. (F87) You can also request building permit files from the Staatsarchiv Nürnberg

(Nuremberg State Archives); there is a separate form for this, proof of ownership is required, and as a rule a fee of €31 plus copies and postage applies (as of November 2026). (F222) You can find out where the files for your district (Landkreis) are kept from the Landratsamt.
- In towns, older building files are often in the **Stadtarchiv** (city archives). One example: in Bayreuth, the building files from about 1820 to 1880 are held as collective files (Sammelakten) in the Stadtarchiv, and there are card indexes and lists there for demolished buildings; the files for existing buildings after 1880 are held by the building regulations office (Bauordnungsamt). (F127)
- Building applications (Baugesuche) exist from about the middle of the 19th century. (F109)

Ask first at the building office whether the file is still there, and otherwise at the Stadtarchiv or Staatsarchiv.

12.2 Reading Plans

A building plan shows what was planned. Whether it was built that way is only shown by comparison with the house, with photos or with a later map. **Pay attention to:**

- **Date and occasion:** new building, alteration, extension, new chimney, new windows?
- **Who submitted the application?** The name links the plan to the chain of ownership (Chapter 9).
- **Existing state and planned work:** Many plans show the old state and the new work in different colors (which vary depending on the period).
- **House number and plot number (Plannummer)** in the title: they show which number the house had at that time.

For rural buildings, it is worth taking a look at **bavarikon** (Bavaria's online portal for art, culture and knowledge): 178 color views of rural buildings from all the parts of Bavaria at that time are online there. The Brandversicherungskammer (fire insurance chamber) had them made between 1879

and 1906, partly to document building forms that were already becoming rare at the time. They show what typical houses of the period looked like. (F120)

12.3 Denkmalliste and Denkmal-Atlas

Is your house a listed historic building (Baudenkmal) or part of an ensemble? The **Denkmalliste** (list of historic monuments) is kept by the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege (Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Monuments); anyone may inspect it. (F128) The list is for information only (nachrichtlich): whether a building is a monument does not depend on the entry. (F128) In the **Bayerischer Denkmal-Atlas** (Bavarian Monument Atlas), you can see architectural monuments, archaeological sites (Bodendenkmäler) and ensembles on the map. (F129) The entry often gives a short description and a date.
Caution: Dates in the Denkmalliste are also often based on visual inspection, older inventories or dates on the building. They are an important clue, but not proof – unless historic building research (Bauforschung) has been carried out.

12.4 Historic Building Research and Tree-Ring Dating

How old a roof truss or half-timbering (Fachwerk) really is can be determined with **dendrochronology** (Dendrochronologie): the annual rings of the construction timber are compared with a reference curve. For a reliable result, the state monument conservators (Landesdenkmalpfleger) generally recommend at least four samples per construction phase, if possible with the waney edge (Waldkante), the last annual ring under the bark. (F181)

- In Franconia (Franken), the **Labor für Dendrochronologie der Universität Bamberg** (Dendrochronology Laboratory of the University of Bamberg) dates construction timber; by 2011 it had dated more than 5,500 buildings, and since then about 200 to 300 objects have been added each year. (F130)

- For a rough idea of costs: a university laboratory in Cologne gives, for 2026, about €250 for one sample and €110 per sample for four to nine samples, in each case plus value-added tax (Umsatzsteuer), plus €100 per hour on site and travel costs. (F223) Ask for a quote in Franconia. If your house is a listed historic building, coordinate the taking of samples and other interventions with the Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde (lower monument protection authority) beforehand. (F184)

Dating the timber shows when the tree was felled. Usually the timber was used soon afterward and without drying (F182) – but reused timber also occurs. A building researcher (Bauforscher) can recognize this from the structure.

12.5 Reading the House Itself

From experience (Aus der Praxis): traces in the building
An old house tells you a lot if you look closely. I have found beams with notches and mortise holes that make no sense in their current position – a sign that the timber may already have been used in another building. Blackened stones and beams indicated where an open fire once burned, such as a hearth or a smoke kitchen (Rauchküche); however, a fire can also leave such traces. Small windows sat in openings that – judging by the bricked-up masonry – had once been larger, and behind a wall an old window came to light that no one had been able to see from the outside for a long time.
You can also learn to read old craft traditions: plaster or mortar with small white lumps of lime (known as Kalkspatzen, lime inclusions), or ceilings whose spaces between the beams are filled with pieces of wood wrapped in straw and clay (Wickelstaken, clay-and-straw-wrapped staves). Such traces do not tell you the year of construction – but they show how the house was built and rebuilt. I photograph every trace with a scale next to it and note exactly where I saw it. For a reliable interpretation, I ask experts, for example from historic building research or monument preservation.

12.6 Old Photos, Postcards, Views

Photos and picture postcards (Ansichtskarten) show the appearance at a time that you often have to estimate. Date them using:

- postmarks, publisher and card number on postcards;
- clothing, vehicles, signs, shop lettering;
- changes to the house that you know from building files.

Ask for photos in the family, among neighbors, at the Stadtarchiv and at the local history society (Heimatverein). Keep the rights in mind: anyone who wants to publish an old photo needs the permission of the rights holder (Chapter 4.6).

12.7 Bringing Plan, Photo and House Together

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** (details invented) A building plan from 1926 shows a bay window (Erker) and new windows on the upper floor for house No. 30. A photo taken around 1935, judging by the clothing and vehicles, already shows the bay window. It can still be seen on the house itself. Taken together, this means: the alteration of 1926 was carried out and was finished by around 1935 at the latest. It does not tell you how old the core of the house is – only an examination of the timber can clarify that.

Finds in the house – old newspapers in the insulation, scratched markings, dates on beams, forgotten objects – are exciting clues. Photograph the find spot and the find before you move anything, and note the date and the location. If a find comes from the above-ground masonry, the attic or from furniture, it is generally not considered an archaeological find (Bodenfund). If, on the other hand, it lies in the soil, in a cellar floor or in fill beneath the floor, ask the Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde. In the case of a listed historic building, building components may not be removed without permission. (F184)

If you come across archaeological finds during earthworks – such as remains of walls, potsherds or bones – you must report this without delay to the Untere Denkmalschutzbehörde (usually the Landratsamt or the independent

city) or to the Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege (Art. 8 Bayerisches Denkmalschutzgesetz [Bavarian Monument Protection Act]). The find and the find spot must remain unchanged until one week after the report, unless the authority permits otherwise. (F185) Movable archaeological finds discovered since July 1, 2023, as a rule become the property of the Free State of Bavaria (Freistaat Bayern) and must be handed over to the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege (Schatzregal [state treasure trove right], Art. 9 Bayerisches Denkmalschutzgesetz). (F186) If in doubt, ask the authority. These notes do not replace legal advice.

Sources for Chapter 12

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- F181 Vereinigung der Landesdenkmalpfleger, Arbeitsblatt 28 „Dendrochronologie“ (Nov. 2008) [Association of State Monument Conservators, Worksheet 28 “Dendrochronology” (Nov. 2008)], https://www.Uni-Bamberg.de/fileadmin/iadk/Dendrochronologie_Empfehlung_Landesdenkmalpfleger.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: as a rule 4 samples per construction phase; document the waney edge (Waldkante) or the heartwood–sapwood boundary; felling date in the report
- F182 Universität Bamberg, Dendrochronologie (Methode) [Dendrochronology (method)], https://www.uni-bamberg.de/iadk/denkmalwissenschaften/dendro/dendrochronologie-methode/ – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: felling time via surviving annual rings up to the bark; construction timber as a rule not dried
- F184 Art. 6 BayDSchG (Text gilt ab 01.05.2026) [text in force from May 1, 2026], https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayDSchG-6 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: permit required for removing/altering listed historic buildings, exceptions in para. 3
- F185 Art. 8 BayDSchG (Text gilt ab 01.05.2026) [text in force from May 1, 2026], https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayDSchG-8 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: duty to report archaeological monuments (Bodendenkmäler), group of persons obligated, one-week period in para. 2
- F186 Art. 9 BayDSchG Schatzregal (Text gilt ab 01.05.2026) [state treasure trove right (text in force from May 1, 2026)], https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayDSchG-9 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: movable archaeological monuments become property of the Free State upon discovery; earlier cases before July 1, 2023 under the old law; compensation/reward
- F207 Art. 39 BayDSG (Allgemeines Auskunftsrecht) [Art. 39 Bavarian Data Protection Act (general right to information)], https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayDSG-39 – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: information on the content of files of public bodies where a legitimate, non-commercial interest is credibly demonstrated; refusal among other things where private interests conflict or the effort would be disproportionate; secrets of the personal sphere excluded; costs according to the Kostengesetz (Costs Act)

- F222 Staatsarchiv Nürnberg, Formular „Anforderung von Baugenehmigungsakten“ (2026) [form “Request for Building Permit Files” (2026)], https://www.gda.bayern.de/mam/ueber-uns/anforderung_baugenehmigungsakten_stan_2026.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: request with proof of ownership; as a rule €31 plus copying costs, packaging, postage, regardless of whether the search is successful; basis: ArchivBO (archive fee regulations)
- F223 Universität zu Köln, Labor für Dendroarchäologie, „Kostenbeiträge Dendrochronologie 2026“ [cost contributions for dendrochronology 2026], https://ufg.phil-fak.uni-koeln.de/sites/ufg/pdf/labore/dendroarchaeologie/dienste/Kostenbeitraege_Dendro_2026_NEU.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: 1 sample €250, 2–3 samples €130 each, 4–9 €110 each, 10 or more €100 each; €100/hour on site; travel costs; plus 19% VAT (USt); valid until the end of 2026

Chapter 13

The Surroundings: Neighboring Houses and Local History

A house never stands alone. The neighboring houses, the street, and the history of the town or village help you fill gaps – and protect you from drawing the wrong conclusions.

13.1 The Number Chain

Make a small table for the houses to the left and right: today's address, land parcel (Flurstück), and all old house numbers. If the neighbors "move along" with your house in every source – in the cadastral records (Kataster), on the map, in the parish register (Kirchenbuch) – your identification is well supported. If a number jumps, you may have found a divided house, a new building, or a reading error.

> **Typical case (Typischer Fall)** (numbers invented) A house first carries No. 57, later No. 30. The cross-check: the neighboring house first carries 58, later 28; the next one 59, later 26. The new numbering runs in the opposite direction and in steps of two – typical of a street-by-street renumbering with even numbers on one side of the street and odd numbers on the other. If the chain fits for all neighbors, the identification is well secured. The adjoining owners (Angrenzer) are often also named in more recent building files and site plans.

13.2 Local History, Local History Books, and Societies

Local history societies (Heimatvereine) and local chronicles (Ortschroniken) often know of house lists, old photos, and family histories. Ask about their yearbooks (Jahresschriften) and indexes; library catalogs sometimes already show the table of contents. House books (Häuserbücher) – books that list the owners of every house in a town over centuries – exist for individual towns, for example for Alt-Forchheim and Hersbruck (both published by the Gesellschaft für Familienforschung in Franken [Society for Family Research in Franconia]) and for Bayreuth. (F127, F133, F134) Ask at the city archives (Stadtarchiv) whether there is a house book or a house card index (Häuserkartei) for your town.

13.3 Reading Older Gazetteers and Descriptions Critically

Topographical gazetteers (topografische Lexika) and descriptions of places from around 1800 – for example Bundschuh's „Lexikon von Franken" [Lexicon of Franconia] (1799–1804) – are valuable because they show many places shortly before they passed to Bavaria (Bayern) (Chapter 1). (F206) For the Middle Ages, however, their authors were not eyewitnesses; you must compare dates taken from such works with original charters (Urkunden).

13.4 The Big Neighbors: Church, Parsonage, Castle, District Office

If your house was located next to a church, a parsonage (Pfarrhof), a monastery or convent, a castle (Schloss), or a district office building (Amtshaus), it is worth looking at their records: plans of these buildings often show the neighboring houses as well. But be careful: mere proximity does not prove that your house belonged to them (Chapter 10).

Sources for Chapter 13

The abbreviations F1, F2 ... in the text refer to this list; abbreviations SQ... refer to sources that were already checked for the guide „Vorfahren in Sachsen finden" [Finding Ancestors

in Saxony]. Online sources accessed on November 2, 2026 (SQ: November 1, 2026), unless stated otherwise.

- F127 Stadt Bayreuth, Stadtarchiv, „Hinweise zur Häuserforschung im Stadtarchiv Bayreuth (Stand 10/2019)“ [Notes on House Research at the Bayreuth City Archives (as of 10/2019)], https://www.bayreuth.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Hinweise-zur-H%C3%A4userforschung-im-Stadtarchiv-Bayreuth.pdf – accessed November 2, 2026
- F133 Open Library, „Häuserbuch Alt-Forchheim (Katalogeintrag)“ [catalog entry], https://openlibrary.org/works/OL45209198W – accessed November 2, 2026
- F134 FamilySearch Catalog, „Hersbrucker Häuserbuch (Katalogeintrag)“ [catalog entry], https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/343790 – accessed November 2, 2026
- F206 Deutsche Biographie, „Bundschuh, Johann Kaspar“, https://www.deutsche-biographie.de/sfz11225.html – accessed November 2, 2026
  Supports: Geographisches statistisch-topographisches Lexikon von Franken, 6 Bde. [6 vols.], Ulm 1799–1804

Chapter 14

The House File: Recording Your Results

At the end of many days in the archives you will have notes, photos, and copies. The house file (Hausakte) puts them into a form that you will still understand five years from now – and that you can show your family.

14.1 The Timeline

A table with four columns is enough: **Year – Event – Certainty – Source**. For certainty, use the same degrees as for people (Chapter 5.3): proven, probable, possible, open.

Year	Event	Certainty	Source
1797	House No. 57 is sold (deed of sale, Kaufbrief)	probable	Cadastral records (Kataster) refer to deed of sale 1797 (Staatsarchiv [State Archives], volume/folio); deed of sale itself not yet read
1832	House drawn on the original survey map (Uraufnahme)	proven	Uraufnahme, sheet/year
ca. 1883	Renumbering 57 → 30	probable	Transfer register (Umschreibheft) + parish registers (Kirchenbücher)

(Invented example.)

14.2 The List of Occupants

By time period: owners with their families, tenants, servants (Gesinde). For every name, the source. Owner does not equal occupant – record the two separately.

14.3 Corrected Mistaken Assumptions

Write down what you believed and then disproved – with the date and the reason. That sounds like a minor matter, but it is worth its weight in gold: this way you will not pass on old errors, and anyone who reads your file later will see why something differs from an older version.

14.4 Open Questions with Responsible Office

Every open question belongs with the office that can answer it: "Owners before 1797 → Staatsarchiv, Briefprotokolle (contract registers) and Lehenbücher (fief books) (Chapter 10)", "Chain of ownership 1900–1960 → Staatsarchiv (Umschreibhefte) and Grundbuchamt (land registry office) (from 1909/1910)", "Age of the building → building files (Bauakten), fire insurance, where appropriate historic building research (Bauforschung) and tree-ring dating (Holzdatierung) (Chapter 12)". This becomes your next inquiry (Chapter 3).

14.5 Publish?

A house history makes a lovely gift for neighbors, the local history society (Heimatverein), or buyers. Before you publish: leave out owners and occupants who are still living or who died only a short time ago – or ask them or their families in writing. This guide names people only if they are verifiably known to have died at least 33 years ago or to have been born more than 120 years ago; this is a cautious rule of thumb of our own, not a legal deadline. Give the current address of an occupied house only with the owners' consent, and publish nothing from the land register (Grundbuch) or building files about current owners (purchase prices, encumbrances, floor plans).

Restraint is also appropriate for people who died long ago if descendants still live in the town, for example in cases of foreclosure auction (Zwangsversteigerung), bankruptcy, illegitimate birth, or criminal offenses. Show images from archives only with permission, and maps only with cleared rights (sections 4.6 and 8.2). These notes do not replace legal advice.

14.6 Checklist "House File"

Cadastral district (Gemarkung), land parcel (Flurstück), all house numbers with time period and source
Timeline with degree of certainty and source for each row
List of occupants, separated into owners and occupants
List of corrected mistaken assumptions
Open questions with the responsible office
More recent names only in the private version

Part III · To Take Along

Chapter 15

Checklists and Templates

15.1 First Steps in 10 Points

1. **Collect what is certain.** Family papers, certificates, memories: note what is documented and what is only family lore.
2. **Clarify time and place.** For each person: when and where? Check which territory the place belonged to at the time – before 1800, Franconia (Franken) was a patchwork (Chapter 1).
3. **Find the responsible office.** From 1876 on, the civil registry office (Standesamt) or the city archives (Stadtarchiv); before that, the parish registers (Kirchenbücher) (Chapters 1 and 3).
4. **Online first.** Matricula, Archion, local family books (Ortsfamilienbücher), newspapers, BayernAtlas (Chapter 2).
5. **Record every find with its source citation.** A find on the internet remains a clue until you have seen the original (Chapter 5).
6. **Learn to read old handwriting.** AI provides suggestions; every fact is checked against the original (Chapter 4).
7. **Keep things organized.** File names, research log, degrees of certainty, backups (Chapter 5).
8. **Make targeted inquiries.** One inquiry per office, with a cost limit and your postal address (Chapter 3).
9. **Travel when it pays off.** Order records in advance, take your call number list (Signaturliste) with you (Chapter 6).
10. **Keep the house in mind.** House number, cadastral records (Kataster), and contract registers (Briefprotokolle) often lead further than the name (Part II).

And above all: Keep at it.

15.2 The Chapter Checklists

Chapter 1: Where Is What?

For each place, I know which lordship (Herrschaft) and which parish (Pfarrei) it belonged to at the time.
I know the family's religious denomination (Catholic, Lutheran [evangelisch], Jewish).
I know from when civil registry records (Standesamtsregister) exist for the place (1876) and where the older registers are kept today.
I have taken into account the retention and closure periods (Fristen) for civil registry records and archives.
I have checked whether the place now belongs to a different municipality as a result of the territorial reform (Gebietsreform).

Chapter 2: Online First

For each place, I know the parish and denomination at the time.
I have looked through Catholic registers on Matricula.
For Lutheran registers, I checked for free what is online at Archion before buying a pass.
I have searched for a local family book (Ortsfamilienbuch).
I have recorded every source with portal, register, image number, address, and date accessed (Chapter 5).
Whatever is missing online is on my list for inquiries (Chapter 3) or for the trip (Chapter 6).

Chapter 3: My Inquiry

Already checked everything online (Chapter 2)?
Right office (3.2), retention and closure periods taken into account (3.4, 3.5, 3.7)?
One specific question, person with dates and place?
My name, address, relationship, a copy of my ID if needed?
Purpose „Familienforschung" (family research) and cost limit stated?
Inquiry entered with its date in my research list (Chapter 5)?

Chapter 4: Reading Old Handwriting

I have an alphabet chart for Kurrent script (and, for more recent letters, for Sütterlin script) at hand.
I practice first on entries whose content I already know.
I keep my own list of abbreviations and Latin terms.
I convert feast-day and Sunday dates with a calendar tool.
Before every upload, I have checked whether I am allowed to share the image and whether it contains data about living persons.
Every fact from an AI suggestion has been checked against the original.
Uncertain readings are marked as uncertain.

Chapter 5: Keeping Things Organized

For every piece of information I have noted the source: repository (Verwahrer), record, exact location.
For online finds, the image number, web address, and date accessed are included.
I distinguish between original and derivative (transcript, Abschrift) as well as between first and second hand.
Every piece of information carries a degree of certainty: proven, probable, possible, or open.
Contradictions are recorded in my notes with both sources.
My files follow a fixed naming scheme.
I back up according to the 3-2-1 rule, with online copies encrypted, and I have tested the backup.
I do not publish information about living people.
My program can export GEDCOM; I know which version.
My research log also contains the searches that turned up nothing.

Chapter 6: Travel Bag

Personalausweis (German national ID card)
Application for use (Benutzungsantrag) (or account in the virtual reading room)

Confirmations of appointments and orders
Call number list, sorted by importance
Notes: excerpt of the family tree, open questions, place names, starting sheet for the house
Pencils, sharpener, eraser, notepad
Laptop or tablet with charger
Camera or phone, charged extra battery pack, charging cable
Magnifying glass, reading glasses if needed
USB stick for the evening backup
Coins for lockers
Tickets, lodging confirmation
Contact details for the parish office (Pfarramt), local chronicler (Ortschronist), local history society (Heimatverein)
Comfortable shoes and a jacket for the cemetery and a walk around town

15.3 Checklists for Part II: Houses and Farmsteads

Chapter 7: Starting Sheet

Today's cadastral district (Gemarkung) and land parcel number(s) (Flurstücksnummer) noted
My own documents sorted by evidential value (acquiring a house is not the same as building it)
All known old house numbers with time period and source
First question decided: owners, occupants, age of the building, or appearance?

Chapter 8: Maps

Original survey map (Uraufnahme) viewed in the BayernAtlas and overlaid on today's map
House number and plot number (Plannummer) of the Uraufnahme noted

Every map recorded with sheet, scale, tax district (Steuergemeinde), and date accessed
Map rule observed: "stood no later than the date of this sheet" – not a year of construction

Chapters 9 and 10: Chain of Ownership

Land register (Grundbuch) (with a letter of authorization [Vollmacht] if I am not the owner) and land register files (Grundakten) requested
Plot number at the time the land register was established (1909/1910) determined
Transfer registers (Umschreibhefte) and land-tax cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster) at the Staatsarchiv (State Archives) looked through
Every change of ownership recorded with date, type, and source
Contracts before 1862 searched for in the contract registers (Briefprotokolle), manorial lord (Grundherr) clarified

Chapters 11 to 13: People, Buildings, Surroundings

Parish registers systematically searched by house number, scope noted
Address books, newspapers, and traces of trades and businesses checked
Building files (Bauakten) requested from the building authority (Bauamt) or the archives; Denkmal-Atlas (monument atlas) checked
Neighboring houses used as a cross-check of the number chain
Older gazetteers and chronicles read critically

Chapter 14: House File

Cadastral district (Gemarkung), land parcel (Flurstück), all house numbers with time period and source
Timeline with degree of certainty and source for each row
List of occupants, separated into owners and occupants
List of corrected mistaken assumptions
Open questions with the responsible office
More recent names only in the private version

15.4 Before Every Publication

Whether on the internet, in a society journal, or as a family or house chronicle: when you publish, you leave the private sphere.

Living and recently deceased people

Living persons are left out, or they have given their consent (Chapters 3.7 and 5).
After exporting, I checked whether there really are no living people left in the file (Chapter 5).
For houses: I do not name owners and occupants from recent times (Chapters 11 and 14).
I read the portal's terms before uploading.

Image rights

I show archival images only according to the archive's rules (Chapters 4.6 and 6.3).
Map excerpts only according to the terms of use of the surveying administration (Vermessungsverwaltung) (Chapter 8.2).
Buildings only from the outside, as they can be seen from public ground (Chapter 6.4).
Recognizable people only with consent; name plates and license plates cannot be made out (Chapter 6.4).

Sources

Every piece of information has its source and its degree of certainty (Chapter 5).
Contradictions are shown openly, not smoothed over.
I do not use data from the Verein für Computergenealogie (CompGen, German genealogy society) commercially (Chapter 2.7).

15.5 Template: Research Log

Enter every search – including those without results, with the scope searched (Chapter 5).

Date	Question	Where searched (source, call number)	Scope	Result	Next step

15.6 Template: Person Sheet

One sheet per person; for every piece of information, the source and degree of certainty (proven, probable, possible, open). Information about living people stays private.

Item	Entry	Source	Degree of certainty
Given name and surname (for women, maiden name)			
Spelling variants			
Birth or baptism (date, place, house number)			
Father			
Mother			
Marriage (date, place, spouse)			
Children			
Occupation, social status (Stand)			
Places of residence and houses (with years)			
Death or burial (date, place)			
Contradictions			

Item	Entry	Source	Degree of certainty
Open questions, next step			

15.7 Template: House Starting Sheet

Item	Entry	Source
Cadastral district (Gemarkung), land parcel(s) today		
Plot number(s) of the original survey (Uraufnahme)		
House numbers with time period		
My own documents (type, date, what they document)		
Manorial lord (Grundherr) before 1848		
Responsible Staatsarchiv, Grundbuchamt (land registry office), Bauamt		
My question		

15.8 Template: House Timeline

Year	Event	Certainty	Source

15.9 Short Glossary for Part II

- **Bodenzins (ground rent):** a fixed annual payment into which the remaining manorial dues were combined in 1848. It could be redeemed (bought off); it was abolished entirely in 1920 (Section 10.4).
- **Briefprotokoll (contract register):** a book in which courts and offices recorded their subjects' contracts before 1862 – purchases, transfers, marriage contracts, debts. From 1862 on, notarial records (Notariatsurkunden) took their place (Section 10.2).
- **Flurstück, Plannummer (land parcel, plot number):** Flurstück is the surveyed plot of land with its number. Plannummer was the name for the plot number in the first Bavarian cadastral records and on the original survey map (Uraufnahme); the number may have changed through division and consolidation (sections 7.2 and 8.1).
- **Gemarkung (cadastral district):** the surveyed district into which the land parcels of a place are divided; it often corresponds to the area of a former municipality, because cadastral districts usually remained unchanged when municipalities were merged (Section 7.2).
- **Grundherr, Grundherrschaft (manorial lord, manorial lordship):** the Grundherr was the person or institution that held superior ownership (Obereigentum) of the land of a farm or house; the peasants held beneficial ownership (Nutzeigentum), worked the farm, and paid the Grundherr annual dues. In Franconia these could be prince-bishoprics (Hochstifte), margraves (Markgrafen), imperial cities (Reichsstädte), monasteries, or nobles; in 1848 manorial lordship in the old sense came to an end (sections 10.1 and 10.4).
- **Grundsteuerkataster, Umschreibheft (land-tax cadastre, transfer register):** the Grundsteuerkataster lists, for each property, the house and plot numbers, buildings, areas, and owners. Later changes of ownership are recorded in the Umschreibebuch (transfer book) and in the Umschreibhefte; depending on the period, you find them via the property number (Besitznummer) or the house number (Section 9.1).
- **Liquidation, Liquidationsprotokoll (liquidation, liquidation record):** the official determination after the survey of who owned which plot of land; the owners confirmed it with their signature, from

1830 in separate Liquidationsprotokolle, from 1840 directly in the cadastral records (Section 9.1).

- **Signatur, Findbuch (call number, finding aid):** the Signatur is the order number of a file in the archive. It appears in the Findbuch, the inventory of the files in a record group (Bestand) (Section 6.2).
- **Steuergemeinde (tax district):** the district for which the cadastral records were compiled. It does not always coincide with later municipalities; you search under its name (Section 8.3).
- **Uraufnahme (original survey):** the first complete survey of Bavaria between 1808 and 1864, carried out for the land tax. Its maps show every house with a red house number and a black plot number (Section 8.1).

Appendix

Sample Letters

Templates, not legal advice. The sample letters are writing aids for your own inquiries to civil registry offices (Standesämter), archives, parish offices (Pfarrämter), and government agencies. They do not replace legal advice or an examination of the individual case; whether an office provides information and what it charges is decided solely by that office. All information is provided without warranty.

Free of charge. The templates are available here free of charge and without registration. A free, non-commercial offering by a private individual – no advertising, no sales, no paid recommendations.

For letters and e-mails that you send yourself or on behalf of others to registry offices, archives, or parish offices, you need no attribution and no license notice – this permission is granted in addition to the license. Anyone who publishes or passes on the templates must comply with CC BY-SA 4.0 – as with the guide.

Why the letters are in German: German archives and offices are more likely to answer – and answer faster – when you write to them in German. The letter texts below are therefore left in German. Below each letter you will find an English translation so that you understand what you are sending; please send the German text.

Sample Letters Part I: Inquiries About Your Ancestors

How to use the templates: Replace everything in [square brackets] with your own information and delete whatever does not apply. Shortening is expressly permitted – one page is always enough. The templates work for both letters and e-mails; in an e-mail you leave out the letterhead, but your postal address still belongs below the text. The fees charged by the individual

offices are given in Chapter 3 (sections 3.4 to 3.6); check the office's website before sending. All information is provided without warranty.
Common letterhead for all templates (including the sample letters for Part II):

> [Ihr Vorname] [Ihr Familienname]
> [Straße] [Hausnummer]
> [Postleitzahl] [Wohnort]
> Telefon: [Telefonnummer]
> E-Mail: [E-Mail-Adresse]
> [Name der Stelle]
> [Abteilung oder z. Hd. – falls bekannt]
> [Straße] [Hausnummer]
> [Postleitzahl] [Ort]
> [Ort], den [Datum]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> [Your first name] [Your surname]
> [Street] [House number]
> [ZIP code] [Town/city]
> Phone: [Phone number]
> E-mail: [E-mail address]
> [Name of the office]
> [Department or attention of – if known]
> [Street] [House number]
> [Postal code] [Town]
> [Place], [Date]

Letter 1: Civil Registry Office (Standesamt) – Certificate or Information from the Civil Status Register

When: The event took place in 1876 or later and is still within the retention periods [Fristen] (birth less than 110, marriage less than 80, death less than

30 years ago); the register is therefore still held by the civil registry office of the place where the event occurred (Section 1.2). You are the person yourself, the spouse, or an ancestor or descendant in the direct line (Section 3.4). For a marriage or death certificate, change the subject line and details accordingly. Mark the copy of your ID as a copy and black out whatever the office does not need (such as the access number). Include certificates of living relatives only if they are necessary as proof and the persons concerned agree.

> Betreff: Antrag auf eine Geburtsurkunde – [Vorname] [Familienname], geboren [Datum oder Jahr] in [Ort]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> für meine private Familienforschung beantrage ich eine Geburtsurkunde [oder: eine Auskunft aus dem Geburtenregister] für folgende Person:
> Name: [Vorname(n)] [Familienname]
> geboren am: [Datum – oder: im Zeitraum [Jahr] bis [Jahr]]
> geboren in: [Ort, ggf. heutiger Ortsteil]
> Eltern: [Vorname Vater] [Familienname] und [Vorname Mutter] [Familienname], geb. [Geburtsname]
> [falls unbekannt: Zeile streichen]
> Registernummer: [falls bekannt]
> Ich bin [Enkelin / Enkel / Urenkelin / ...] dieser Person und damit in gerader Linie mit ihr verwandt. Zum Nachweis lege ich Kopien folgender Urkunden bei:
> – meine Geburtsurkunde
> – die Geburtsurkunde meines Vaters / meiner Mutter [Vorname] [Familienname]
> – [weitere Urkunden, die die Verbindung zeigen]
> – eine Kopie meines Personalausweises (als Kopie gekennzeichnet)
> Bitte teilen Sie mir die anfallende Gebühr mit oder legen Sie eine Rechnung bei.
> Sollten Unterlagen fehlen, freue ich mich über einen kurzen Hinweis.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Unterschrift]
> [Vorname] [Familienname]
> Anlagen: [Anzahl] Kopien

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Application for a birth certificate – [first name] [surname], born [date or year] in [place]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> for my private family research, I am applying for a birth certificate [or: information from the birth register] for the following person:
> Name: [First name(s)] [Surname]
> born on: [Date – or: in the period [year] to [year]]
> born in: [Place, if applicable today's district of the town]
> Parents: [Father's first name] [Surname] and [Mother's first name] [Surname], née [maiden name]
> [if unknown: delete line]
> Register number: [if known]
> I am [granddaughter / grandson / great-granddaughter / ...] of this person and thus related to them in the direct line. As proof, I enclose copies of the following certificates:
> – my birth certificate
> – the birth certificate of my father / my mother [first name] [surname]
> – [further certificates showing the connection]
> – a copy of my national ID card (Personalausweis) (marked as a copy)
> Please let me know the applicable fee or enclose an invoice.
> If any documents are missing, I would appreciate a brief note.
> Sincerely,
> [Signature]
> [First name] [Surname]
> Enclosures: [number] copies

Letter 2: City or Municipal Archives – Older Civil Registry Entry

When: The retention periods have expired (birth more than 110, marriage more than 80, death more than 30 years ago). In Bavaria (Bayern), the register is then usually held in the archives of the city or municipality (Stadt- oder Gemeindearchiv), not in the State Archives (Staatsarchiv) (sections 1.2

and 3.2). Some city archives charge for the search even if nothing is found – ask about the costs beforehand (Section 3.6).

> Betreff: Anfrage zu einem [Geburts-/Heirats-/Sterbe]eintrag aus dem Standesamt [Ort], [Jahr]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> ich erforsche meine Familiengeschichte und suche einen Eintrag aus den Personenstandsregistern des Standesamts [Ort]. Nach meiner Kenntnis werden diese Register inzwischen in Ihrem Archiv verwahrt.
> Art des Eintrags: [Geburt / Heirat / Sterbefall]
> Person(en): [Vorname] [Familienname] [bei Heirat: und [Vorname] [Familienname]]
> Datum/Zeitraum: [Datum – oder: zwischen [Jahr] und [Jahr]]
> Ort: [Ort]
> Bekannt ist: [z. B. Beruf, Wohnort, Namen der Eltern – nur was sicher ist]
> Ich bitte um eine Kopie oder einen Scan des Eintrags, gern einschließlich eventueller Randvermerke. Mit Kosten bis [Betrag] Euro bin ich einverstanden; sollte es teurer werden, bitte ich vorher um eine kurze Nachricht.
> Falls die Register nicht bei Ihnen liegen, wäre ich für einen Hinweis dankbar, wo ich sie finde.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Unterschrift]
> [Vorname] [Familienname]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Inquiry about a [birth/marriage/death] entry from the civil registry office of [place], [year]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> I am researching my family history and am looking for an entry in the civil status registers of the civil registry office of [place]. To my knowledge, these registers are now kept in your archives.
> Type of entry: [Birth / Marriage / Death]
> Person(s): [First name] [Surname] [for a marriage: and [first name] [surname]]

> Date/period: [Date – or: between [year] and [year]]
> Place: [Place]
> Known facts: [e.g., occupation, place of residence, parents' names – only what is certain]
> I would like to request a copy or a scan of the entry, preferably including any marginal notes. I agree to costs of up to €[amount]; should it be more expensive, I would ask for a brief message beforehand.
> If the registers are not held by you, I would be grateful for a hint as to where I can find them.
> Sincerely,
> [Signature]
> [First name] [Surname]

Letter 3: Catholic Parish Office or Diocesan Archives – Information from the Parish Register (Matrikel)

When: You are looking for a baptism, marriage, or burial in a Catholic parish. Check older registers first for free on Matricula (Chapter 2). More recent entries are restricted; the dioceses' closure periods (Fristen) are given in Section 3.5. Depending on the diocese, the parish office (Pfarramt) or the diocesan archives (Bistumsarchiv) is responsible – if in doubt, ask where the registers are kept. Some diocesan archives do not carry out research for private family research (Section 3.5).

> Betreff: Bitte um Auskunft aus der [Tauf-/Trau-/Sterbe]matrikel [Pfarrei] – [Familienname], [Jahr]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> für meine private Familienforschung bitte ich um eine Auskunft aus der [Tauf-/Trau-/Sterbe]matrikel der Pfarrei [Pfarrei], [Ort].
> Gesucht: [Taufe / Trauung / Beerdigung]
> Person(en): [Vorname] [Familienname] [bei Trauung: und [Vorname] [Familienname]]
> Zeitraum: [Jahr] bis [Jahr] [so eng wie möglich]
> Ort: [Ort, ggf. zugehöriges Dorf: [Dorf]]
> Bekannt ist: [z. B. Vater [Vorname] [Familienname], Beruf [Beruf]]

> Schon geprüft: [z. B. Matricula, Bücher bis [Jahr]]
> Hilfreich wären mir der vollständige Eintrag mit Datum, Eltern bzw. Zeugen und – wenn möglich – eine Abschrift oder Kopie.
> Mir ist bewusst, dass Ihre Zeit begrenzt ist. Für die Suche bin ich bereit, bis zu [Betrag] Euro zu zahlen. Bitte geben Sie mir vorher Bescheid, falls mehr Aufwand nötig ist oder falls die Bücher an anderer Stelle liegen.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Unterschrift]
> [Vorname] [Familienname]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Request for information from the [baptism/marriage/death] register of [parish] – [surname], [year]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> for my private family research, I would like to request information from the [baptism/marriage/death] register of the parish of [parish], [place].
> Looking for: [Baptism / Marriage / Burial]
> Person(s): [First name] [Surname] [for a marriage: and [first name] [surname]]
> Period: [Year] to [year] [as narrow as possible]
> Place: [Place, if applicable the associated village: [village]]
> Known facts: [e.g., father [first name] [surname], occupation [occupation]]
> Already checked: [e.g., Matricula, registers up to [year]]
> It would help me to have the complete entry with date, parents or witnesses, and – if possible – a transcript or copy.
> I am aware that your time is limited. I am willing to pay up to €[amount] for the search. Please let me know beforehand if more effort is needed or if the registers are kept elsewhere.
> Sincerely,
> [Signature]
> [First name] [Surname]

Letter 4: Landeskirchliches Archiv in Nuremberg or Lutheran (evangelisch) Parish Office – Information from the Parish Register (Kirchenbuch)

When: You are looking for a baptism, marriage, confirmation (Konfirmation), or burial in an Evangelical Lutheran parish in Bavaria. First check for free whether the register is online at Archion (Section 2.3). The Landeskirchliches Archiv der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Bayern (ELKB) (archives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria) in Nuremberg answers family research inquiries only in writing, via its form or by e-mail; it provides information only once the register has been deposited

there and the closure periods have expired. For more recent entries, ask the parish office (Pfarramt). Closure periods and fees: Section 3.5.

> Betreff: Anfrage Familienforschung – [Taufe/Trauung/Beerdigung] [Familienname], Pfarrei [Pfarrei], [Jahr]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> für meine private Familienforschung bitte ich um eine Auskunft aus dem [Tauf-/Trau-/Bestattungs]buch der evangelisch-lutherischen Pfarrei [Pfarrei].
> Gesucht: [Taufe / Trauung / Beerdigung]
> Person(en): [Vorname] [Familienname] [bei Trauung: und [Vorname] [Familienname]]
> Datum/Zeitraum: [Datum – oder: [Jahr] bis [Jahr], so eng wie möglich]
> Ort: [Ort, ggf. zugehöriges Dorf: [Dorf]]
> Bekannt ist: [z. B. Vater [Vorname] [Familienname], Beruf [Beruf]]
> Schon geprüft: [z. B. Archion, Bücher bis [Jahr]]
> Ich bitte um den Wortlaut des Eintrags oder eine Kopie. Sollten Kosten über [Betrag] Euro entstehen, bitte ich vorher um Nachricht.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Unterschrift]
> [Vorname] [Familienname]
> [Postanschrift, auch bei E-Mail]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Family research inquiry – [baptism/marriage/burial] [surname], parish of [parish], [year]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> for my private family research, I would like to request information from the [baptism/marriage/burial] register of the Evangelical Lutheran parish of [parish].
> Looking for: [Baptism / Marriage / Burial]
> Person(s): [First name] [Surname] [for a marriage: and [first name] [surname]]
> Date/period: [Date – or: [year] to [year], as narrow as possible]
> Place: [Place, if applicable the associated village: [village]]
> Known facts: [e.g., father [first name] [surname], occupation [occupation]]

> Already checked: [e.g., Archion, registers up to [year]]
> I would like to request the wording of the entry or a copy. Should costs exceed €[amount], I would ask to be notified beforehand.
> Sincerely,
> [Signature]
> [First name] [Surname]
> [Postal address, also for e-mail]

Letter 5: Staatsarchiv (State Archives) – Question About Suitable Record Groups

When: You are looking for records about property, marriage, permission to settle (Ansässigmachung), estates, or emigration and do not know which record group (Bestand) fits. You do **not** want to commission research, but rather a hint as to where you can search yourself. Which Staatsarchiv is responsible and which restrictions apply in 2026 is explained in Section 1.5. With the state archives, the inquiry can also be submitted via the secure virtual reading room (Section 3.6).

> Betreff: Frage nach Beständen zu [Ort] – [Thema, z. B. Heirat und Ansässigmachung [Familienname]], [Zeitraum]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> ich plane einen Besuch in Ihrem Lesesaal [bzw. an Ihrem Ausweichstandort] und möchte mich gut vorbereiten.
> Meine Frage: Welche Bestände kommen für folgendes Thema in Betracht?
> Ort: [Ort], damals [Landgericht / Amt / Herrschaft – falls bekannt]
> Zeitraum: [Jahr] bis [Jahr]
> Thema: [z. B. Heirat von [Vorname] [Familienname], Beruf [Beruf], um [Jahr]; Übergabe des Anwesens an die Kinder um [Jahr]]
> Bereits geprüft: [z. B. Online-Recherche im virtuellen Lesesaal unter dem Ortsnamen]
> Mir genügt ein kurzer Hinweis auf Bestände oder Signaturen; die Durchsicht übernehme ich selbst. Der Zweck ist familiengeschichtlich.
> Sollten dennoch Kosten entstehen, bitte ich vorher um eine Nachricht.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen

> [Unterschrift]
> [Vorname] [Familienname]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Question about record groups for [place] – [topic, e.g., marriage and permission to settle for [surname]], [period]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> I am planning a visit to your reading room [or: to your temporary alternative location]
> and would like to prepare well.
> My question: Which record groups might be relevant to the following topic?
> Place: [Place], at the time [Landgericht (older Bavarian district court and administrative office) / Amt (district office) / Herrschaft (lordship) – if known]
> Period: [Year] to [year]
> Topic: [e.g., marriage of [first name] [surname], occupation [occupation], around [year]; transfer of the property to the children around [year]]
> Already checked: [e.g., online search in the virtual reading room under the place name]
> A brief hint about record groups or call numbers is enough for me; I will look through them myself. The purpose is family history.
> Should costs arise nonetheless, I would ask for a message beforehand.
> Sincerely,
> [Signature]
> [First name] [Surname]

Letter 6: Polite Follow-Up

When: You have not received an answer after the stated processing time. Keep it short and friendly – and do not follow up if the office expressly asks you not to (Section 3.8).

> Betreff: Nachfrage zu meiner Anfrage vom [Datum] – [Familienname], [Ort], [Jahr]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> am [Datum] habe ich Ihnen eine Anfrage [per E-Mail / per Brief / über Ihr Formular] geschickt. Es ging um [einen Satz: z. B. den Geburtseintrag von [Vorname] [Familienname], [Ort], um [Jahr]].
> Ich möchte nur kurz nachfragen, ob meine Anfrage angekommen ist und ob Sie noch Angaben von mir benötigen. Eine ungefähre Einschätzung, wann ich mit einer Antwort rechnen kann, würde mir schon helfen.
> [Falls zutreffend: Ihr Zeichen / Vorgangsnummer: [Nummer]]
> Vielen Dank für Ihre Mühe.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Unterschrift]
> [Vorname] [Familienname]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Follow-up on my inquiry of [date] – [surname], [place], [year]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> on [date] I sent you an inquiry [by e-mail / by letter / via your form]. It concerned [one sentence: e.g., the birth entry of [first name] [surname], [place], around [year]].
> I would just like to briefly ask whether my inquiry has arrived and whether you need any further information from me. A rough estimate of when I can expect an answer would already be helpful.
> [If applicable: Your reference / case number: [number]]
> Thank you very much for your efforts.
> Sincerely,
> [Signature]
> [First name] [Surname]

Short Checklist Before Sending

- Are the name, place, and period correct? Are spelling variants mentioned?
- Is the amount stated up to which you will cover costs?

- Is your full postal address in the letter?
- Does it contain only the necessary information about living relatives? Is the copy of your ID marked as a copy?
- Have you saved a copy for your records?

Note: The templates do not replace legal advice. Whether you are entitled to it or have a legitimate interest is decided by the respective office.

Sample Letters Part II: Inquiries About House History

How to use the templates: Replace everything in [square brackets] with your own information and delete whatever does not apply. One page is always enough. You will find the common letterhead at the beginning of the sample letters for Part I.

Letter H1: Staatsarchiv (State Archives) – Cadastral Records (Kataster) and Transfer Registers (Umschreibhefte)

When: You know the tax district (Steuergemeinde) and the plot number (Plannummer) or house number (Chapter 8) and would like to know which cadastral volumes exist (Chapter 9). With the state archives, this can also be done via the virtual reading room.

> Betreff: Anfrage zu Katasterbänden – Steuergemeinde [Name], Plan-Nr. [Nummer] / Haus-Nr. [Nummer]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> für meine private Haus- und Familienforschung suche ich die Besitzfolge des Anwesens
> Steuergemeinde: [Name der damaligen Steuergemeinde]
> Plannummer(n): [Nummer(n) laut Uraufnahme oder Grundbuch]
> Hausnummer(n): [alte Hausnummer(n), soweit bekannt]
> heutige Lage: [Gemarkung und Flurstück – keine Privatadresse nötig]
> Ich bitte um Auskunft, welche Bände des Grundsteuerkatasters und welche

> Umschreibhefte zu dieser Steuergemeinde bei Ihnen vorhanden sind, mit Signatur.
> Ich möchte die Bände anschließend im Lesesaal einsehen.
> Der Zweck ist familiengeschichtlich bzw. heimatkundlich.
> Sollten für eine Auskunft Kosten entstehen, bitte ich vorher um Nachricht, wenn sie [Betrag] Euro übersteigen.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Name]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Inquiry about cadastral volumes – tax district [name], plot no. [number] / house no. [number]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> for my private house and family research, I am looking for the chain of ownership of the property
> Tax district: [Name of the tax district at the time]
> Plot number(s): [Number(s) according to the original survey (Uraufnahme) or land register]
> House number(s): [old house number(s), as far as known]
> Present location: [Cadastral district (Gemarkung) and land parcel (Flurstück) – no private address needed]
> I would like to ask which volumes of the land-tax cadastre (Grundsteuerkataster) and which transfer registers (Umschreibhefte) for this tax district you hold, with call numbers.
> I would then like to view the volumes in the reading room.
> The purpose is family history or local history.
> Should costs arise for providing information, I would ask to be notified beforehand if they exceed €[amount].
> Sincerely,
> [Name]

Letter H2: Staatsarchiv (State Archives) – Contract Register (Briefprotokoll) for a Known Contract

When: The cadastral records mention an acquisition with a date („laut Brief vom …“ [according to the deed of …]), and you are looking for the contract (Chapter 10).

> Betreff: Anfrage Briefprotokoll – Kauf/Übergabe [Jahr], [Ort]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> laut Grundsteuerkataster [Signatur, Band, Seite/Folio] erwarb [Name des Erwerbers] das Anwesen [Haus-Nr. / Plan-Nr.] in [Ort] durch [Kauf / Übergabe / Tausch] laut Vertrag vom [Datum].

> Ich bitte um einen Hinweis, in welchem Bestand und unter welcher Signatur die Briefprotokolle des damals zuständigen [Gerichts / Amts / Grundherrn] für das Jahr [Jahr] verwahrt werden. Den Band möchte ich im Lesesaal einsehen
> [oder: Ich bitte um ein Angebot für eine Reproduktion der betreffenden Seiten].
> Zweck: Familien- und Hausgeschichte.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Name]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Inquiry about contract register – purchase/transfer [year], [place]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> according to the land-tax cadastre [call number, volume, page/folio], [name of the acquirer] acquired the property [house no. / plot no.] in [place] by [purchase / transfer / exchange] according to a contract dated [date].
> I would be grateful for a hint as to in which record group and under which call number the contract registers (Briefprotokolle) of the [court / district office / manorial lord] responsible at the time for the year [year] are kept. I would like to view the volume in the reading room
> [or: I would like to request a quote for a reproduction of the relevant pages].
> Purpose: Family and house history.
> Sincerely,
> [Name]

Letter H3: Amt für Digitalisierung, Breitband und Vermessung (Office for Digitization, Broadband and Surveying) – Liquidation Record (Liquidationsprotokoll) and Original Survey (Uraufnahme)

When: You would like to see the liquidation record or older map versions that are still held at the surveying office (Chapter 9.2). The fees vary from office to office – ask beforehand.

Betreff: Einsicht in Liquidationsprotokoll – Gemarkung [Name], Flurstück [Nummer]
Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
für meine private Hausforschung möchte ich das Liquidationsprotokoll und, soweit vorhanden, ältere Fassungen der Flurkarte einsehen für:
Gemarkung / Steuergemeinde: [Name]
Flurstück heute: [Nummer]
Plannummer der Uraufnahme: [Nummer, soweit bekannt]
Bitte teilen Sie mir mit,
– ob die Unterlagen bei Ihnen oder im Staatsarchiv liegen,
– wie ich einen Termin zur Einsicht vereinbaren kann und
– welche Gebühren für Einsicht oder Kopien anfallen.
Mit freundlichen Grüßen
[Name]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Viewing of liquidation record – cadastral district [name], land parcel [number]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> for my private house research, I would like to view the liquidation record and, if available, older versions of the cadastral map (Flurkarte) for:
> Cadastral district / tax district: [Name]
> Land parcel today: [Number]
> Plot number of the original survey: [Number, as far as known]
> Please let me know
> – whether the records are held by you or in the Staatsarchiv,
> – how I can make an appointment to view them, and
> – what fees apply for viewing or copies.
> Sincerely,
> [Name]

Letter H4: Grundbuchamt (Land Registry Office) – Viewing the Land Register (Grundbuch) and Land Register Files (Grundakten) (with Letter of Authorization)

When: You are researching a house that does not belong to you and have a letter of authorization (Vollmacht) from the owners (template H5). Without a letter of authorization, it is uncertain whether the land registry office will recognize your interest as legitimate; there is no special rule for family and house research (Section 9.4). Many land registry offices do not accept applications by telephone or by simple e-mail – send the letter with a copy of your ID. Mark the copy of your ID as a copy and black out whatever the office does not need (such as the access number).

> Betreff: Antrag auf Grundbucheinsicht – Gemarkung [Name], Blatt [Nummer, falls bekannt]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

> im Auftrag und mit Vollmacht der Eigentümer [Namen der Eigentümer] (Vollmacht anbei) beantrage ich Einsicht in
> – das Grundbuch von [Gemarkung], Blatt [Nummer] / Flurstück [Nummer],
> – die Grundakten, insbesondere die bei der Anlegung des Grundbuchs angelegten Unterlagen und ältere Kaufverträge,
> – soweit vorhanden: die geschlossenen früheren Blätter.
> Zweck: Erforschung der Geschichte des Hauses für die Eigentümer.
> [Ich bitte um einen einfachen Ausdruck. / Ich möchte zur Einsicht persönlich kommen und bitte um einen Termin.]
> Eine Kopie meines Personalausweises liegt bei.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Name]
> Anlagen: Vollmacht, Ausweiskopie

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Application to view the land register – cadastral district [name], folio (Blatt) [number, if known]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> on behalf of and with a letter of authorization from the owners [names of the owners]
> (letter of authorization enclosed), I am applying to view
> – the land register of [cadastral district], folio [number] / land parcel [number],
> – the land register files, in particular the documents created when the land register was established and older purchase contracts,
> – if available: the closed earlier folios.
> Purpose: Research into the history of the house on behalf of the owners.
> [I would like to request a simple printout. / I would like to come in person to view the records and request an appointment.]
> A copy of my national ID card is enclosed.
> Sincerely,
> [Name]
> Enclosures: letter of authorization, copy of ID

Letter H5: Letter of Authorization from the Owners

When: for Letter H4 and for viewing building files (Bauakten) (Letter H6). Short and clear; the owners sign it themselves. Some offices require the original letter of authorization or a copy of the owners' ID.

> Vollmacht
> Wir/Ich, [Vorname(n) und Name(n) der Eigentümer], [Anschrift],
> Eigentümer des Grundstücks [Gemarkung], Flurstück [Nummer],
> bevollmächtige(n) hiermit
> [Vorname Name der forschenden Person], [Anschrift],
> zur Einsicht in das Grundbuch und die Grundakten sowie in die Bauakten dieses Grundstücks bei den zuständigen Behörden und Archiven und zur Anforderung von Ausdrucken und Kopien.
> Die Unterlagen dienen nur der Erforschung der Hausgeschichte. Angaben über lebende Personen werden ohne deren Zustimmung nicht veröffentlicht.
> Die Vollmacht gilt bis [Datum] [oder: bis auf Widerruf].
> [Ort], [Datum]
>
> _____
> Unterschrift(en) der Eigentümer

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Letter of Authorization
> We/I, [first name(s) and surname(s) of the owners], [address], owner(s) of the property [cadastral district], land parcel [number],
> hereby authorize
> [first name and surname of the researcher], [address],
> to view the land register and the land register files as well as the building files for this property at the responsible authorities and archives, and to request printouts and copies.
> The records serve solely to research the history of the house. Information about living persons will not be published without their consent.
> This letter of authorization is valid until [date] [or: until revoked].
> [Place], [Date]
>
> _____

> Signature(s) of the owner(s)

Letter H6: Bauamt (Building Authority) – Viewing Building Files (Bauakten)

When: You are looking for building plans and permits (Chapter 12). In the same letter, ask whether older files have been transferred to an archive.

> Betreff: Antrag auf Einsicht in Bauakten – [Gemarkung], Flurstück [Nummer]
> Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,
> [als Eigentümer / mit Vollmacht der Eigentümer (anbei)] beantrage ich Einsicht in die Bauakten zum Grundstück [Gemarkung], Flurstück [Nummer]
> [heutige Lage in Worten, z. B. „Wohnhaus im Ortskern“].
> Mich interessieren besonders ältere Baupläne und Genehmigungen [aus dem Zeitraum … bis …].
> Falls ältere Akten an ein Stadt-, Gemeinde- oder Staatsarchiv abgegeben wurden, bitte ich um einen Hinweis, wo sie heute liegen.
> Bitte teilen Sie mir die anfallenden Gebühren vorab mit.
> Mit freundlichen Grüßen
> [Name]
> Anlage: [Vollmacht]

English translation (for your understanding only – send the German text):

> Subject: Application to view building files – [cadastral district], land parcel [number]
> Dear Sir or Madam,
> [as the owner / with a letter of authorization from the owners (enclosed)]
> I am applying to view the building files for the property [cadastral district], land parcel [number]
> [present location in words, e.g., “residential house in the town center”].
> I am particularly interested in older building plans and permits [from the period … to …].

> If older files have been transferred to a city, municipal, or state archive, I would be grateful for a hint as to where they are kept today.
> Please let me know the applicable fees in advance.
> Sincerely,
> [Name]
> Enclosure: [letter of authorization]

Note: The templates do not replace legal advice. Whether a legitimate interest is recognized is decided by the respective office.