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The right way to trace your “family tree”

Genealogical research
in the civil status archives
of North Rhine-Westphalia

Impressum

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Cover: 1852 genealogical table of the Rosen-Klingenmann family from Detmold (LAV NRW OWL D 77 Genealogische Tafeln Nr. 70)
P. 3: Photo of the Director (Landesarchiv NRW)

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Preface



Genealogy is the historical discipline where the significance of history in relation to people's identity is most directly apparent. Anyone who seeks his roots starts off by researching his family origins and finding out who his ancestors were. Over hundreds of years of history, lineage and family relationships have defined people's social status and have either legitimised claims to power or undermined legal claims in inheritance matters. The latter scenario at least still applies today. However, genealogy is about far more than researching one's own family history. Since it generally investigates relationship ties between people, it produces results which may be of significance for all the disciplines within historical scholarship.

Information about baptisms or births as well as marriages and deaths can be found in the archives, and it forms the basis of research into family histories. The most important archival sources for investigating family origins and interrelationships have since the 16th century been parish registers, duplicate parish registers, registers of births, marriages and deaths, and registers of Jews and dissidents as well as civil registers. The North Rhine-Westphalia state archives contain a total of roughly 490,000 volumes in its Rhineland and East Westphalia-Lippe divisions, and anyone who is interested in using them can do so provided that any restrictions on access have expired. In particular, the written records from before 1900 are largely available in digital form, and it is also intended to make them available online in the not too distant future.

North Rhine-Westphalia was the first German Federal State to set up specialised civil status archives since the mid-1950s. About 60 years of experience and expertise have therefore gone into compiling this brochure about the civil status records that have been handed down within the state archives. I should like to thank the Rhineland and East Westphalia-Lippe divisions for their dedication in revising and producing the new edition of this brochure. I wish all readers and users every success in investigating their roots or in researching other historical issues.

Dr. Frank M. Bischoff

Director of the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives

Welcome to the archives!

Well-known Detmold
family in 1925
(LAV NRW OWL D 75
Nr. 9966)



Soldiers of the Wehrmacht and four
women at a wedding (year unknown)
(LAV NRW OWL D 75 Nr. 10786)

Would you like to research your family

because you find history fascinating, or because you have found a box of old family photos in the attic and have now become curious, or because you have had to say goodbye to an older relative who was a key figure in the family for decades but about whose life and personality surprisingly little is known?

You should start your “research” by talking to brothers and sisters, parents or grandparents, by collecting documents kept by the family, and by getting people to tell you stories about heirlooms that have been handed down. As lively as oral reports are and however valuable private documents may be, personal reminiscences of the past and handed down documents generally provide only a limited picture. Besides, personal memories vary greatly.

You can also search online for information about your ancestors. Thanks to the access it provides to an infinite amount of personal information, the internet offers a way of



shedding light on family history. However, this information has to be carefully checked, especially as it not complete in itself: most of the information kept in archives is not on the World Wide Web.

So come and visit the archives! You'll find information here that isn't available anywhere else. Government and municipal archives in particular – as part of their legal duty – preserve documents from periods extending far into the past. Although such records usually reflect the viewpoint of the government and local authorities, they also contain details of your family, e.g. in a marriage certificate.

This brochure is intended to help you with your family research in the North Rhine-Westphalia civil status archives. This is because many people have inhibitions about accessing an archive, or the search for ancestors may prove to be much harder than originally assumed.

You can find out which archive is the right one for you by using the "Archive in NRW"

archive portal (www.archive.nrw.de). This shows the rich archival landscape of North Rhine-Westphalia with archives within the various sectors. The archive portal that is published and maintained by the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives provides a convenient way of undertaking research across the various archives.

The North Rhine-Westphalia state archives stores the state records handed down by our Federal State and its predecessor territories. In its decentralised Rhineland and East Westphalia-Lippe divisions it maintains the Rhineland civil status archives (Duisburg) and the Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives (Detmold). These specialised archives manage in particular the duplicate copies of the civil status records for their respective part of the state.

The parish registers, duplicate parish registers, registers of births, marriages and deaths, and registers of dissidents and Jews that are stored in the civil status archives, as well as the registry offices' civil status

registers, contain details of baptisms/births, marriages and deaths/burials. This key data forms the indispensable framework for research into family history. Where else apart from Detmold and Duisburg is so much civil status data for such large regions (Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe) provided for research purposes in a central facility?

This brochure should help to get you started on your "family history adventure" and show you how to access the sources that are available in the North Rhine-Westphalia civil status archives. Perhaps it will also make you curious about other archival documents and new historical questions.

Step by step to your “family tree”

1852 genealogical
table of the Rosen-
Klingemann family
from Detmold (LAV NRW
OWL D 77 Genealogische
Tafeln Nr. 70)



Would you like to find out something about your family's history, but don't know and where to begin?

➤ Here are a few tips on how to start using the archives and how to go about researching your ancestors:

1. Research starts at home:

➤ Gather up all the documents that you have got from your family (family registers, photo albums, letters, passports etc.). Your own birth certificate will also provide you with information about your ancestors.

➤ Ask your relatives whether they can provide you with documents or information for your research.

2. “Think first, then go to the archives”:

➤ Work out what it is that you want to find out about your family, and the information that you need in order to do so.

➤ Specify your questions up by consulting reference works, gazetteers and local

chronicles or historical handbooks → see reading list to get started.

➤ Do online research in order to obtain initial pointers. But check the information and names in the original sources in the archives! → see Genealogy interlinked.

3. Off to the archives! Which archive?

If you need information from a parish register, consult the respective church/parish archives. Parish registers, duplicate parish registers and registers of births, marriages and deaths can also be found in the civil status archives of the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives → see pages 12–17.

Local documents such as residency registration documents are kept in the relevant municipal archives. You can find land registers, adoption papers and other documents from courts and government authorities in the responsible state archives, as well as in the divisions of the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives.

Stemna Gentis

Melanchthonio-
Rosenidarum.

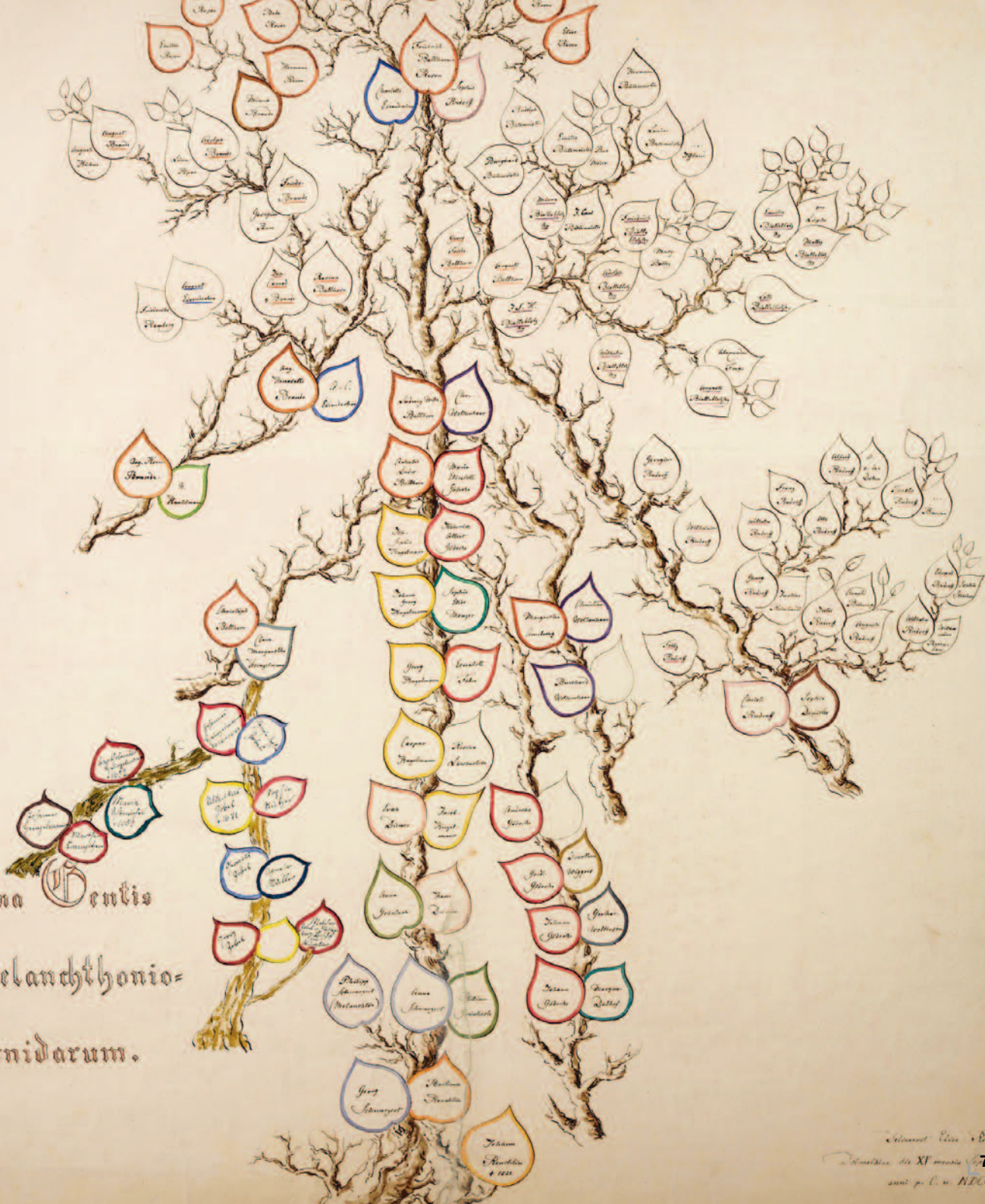


Chart representing kin-
ships of Maria Leopoldine,
princess of Anhalt-Dessau
and second wife of the
count of Lippe
(LAV NRW OWL L 7 A I b)

➤ Find out which is the right archive for you, for instance at www.archive.nrw.de.

4. Once you've found the right archive:

Now use the → Beständeübersicht (Guide to holdings). The guide to archival holdings lists what you'll find in an archive. It's the most important "tool" for work in the archive.

➤ You'll be given guide to archival holdings for an archive in the reading room, or you can search through it online. Caution: You won't find any personal data in it!

5. Find archival material in the finding aid:

Once you have selected the right collection for your purposes,

➤ ask for the finding aid. Every collection, and consequently every finding aid, is marked with reference code. In the finding aid the archival materials – usually files or registers – within a collection are enumer-

ated and listed in greater detail with their → Laufzeit (Date of creation) and → Signatur (Reference code).

➤ Some of the state archives' finding aids are available online, and you can obtain all the others in the reading room.

➤ If despite this you don't make any progress, feel free to ask the staff there for help.

6. Ordering what you have found:

If you have found the relevant records, parish registers or documents from genealogical collections in the finding aid,

➤ then you can order them for reading in the reading room by submitting a form to the reading room supervisory staff.

7. The abbreviation:

Digital versions of parish registers, duplicate parish registers, and in some cases more recent civil status documents, can be viewed on the reading room computer in the North Rhine-Westphalia civil status archives; occa-

sionally they are still available in microfiche format. In Detmold you can also for the time being use the parish register card index for Lippe which is arranged by place and name (note: if in doubt, check the information contained in it against the original!).

8. The research can begin:

You will realise that carrying out research in an archive is more laborious and time-consuming than in a library, but all the more exciting. The writing in the "old documents" is often hard to read, and sometimes the information that has been deciphered is difficult to classify, so you will need to refer to other reference works or other collections, or you will need to obtain further advice from other researchers or correspond with them.

➤ Don't get discouraged! Even professionals repeatedly run into "dead ends", and you'll be continually compensated through the discovery of "treasures".

Reading list to get started

Thomas Brakmann: Personenstandsregister, in: Jens Heckl (Hg.): Unbekannte Quellen: »Massenakten« des 20. Jahrhunderts. Untersuchungen seriellen Schriftguts aus normierten Verwaltungsverfahren, Band 2 (Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen 43), Düsseldorf 2012, S. 189–211.

Thomas Brakmann / Bettina Joergens (Hg.): Familie? Blutsverwandtschaft, Hausgemeinschaft und Genealogie. Beiträge zum 8. Detmolder Sommergespräch (Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen 51), Essen 2014.

Sabine Brenner-Wilczek / Gertrude Cepl-Kaufmann / Max Plassmann: Einführung in die moderne Archivarbeit, Darmstadt 2006. Deutsche Schriftkunde in der Neuzeit. Ein Übungsbuch mit Beispielen aus bayerischen Archiven, bearb. von Elisabeth Noichl und Christa Schmeißer, München ²2007.

Kurt Dülfer / Hans-Enno Korn: Gebräuchliche Abkürzungen des 16.–20. Jahrhunderts, Marburg ⁹2006.

Eckhart G. Franz / Thomas Lux: Einführung in die Archivkunde, Darmstadt ⁹2018.

Bettina Joergens / Christian Reinicke (Hg.): Archive, Familienforschung und Geschichtswissenschaft. Annäherungen und Aufgaben (Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen 7), Düsseldorf 2006.

Bettina Joergens (Hg.): Jüdische Genealogie im Archiv, in der Forschung und digital. Quellenkunde und Erinnerung (Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen 41), Essen 2011.

Roland Linde: Vorfahren- und Familienforschung in Lippe. Grundlagen, Quellen, Hilfsmittel, Horn-Bad Meinberg ³1992.

Roger P. Minert: Alte Kirchenbücher richtig lesen. Hand- und Übungsbuch für Familiengeschichtsforscher, Wuppertal 2004.

Eike Pies: Abenteuer Ahnenforschung. Das praktische Handbuch für Einsteiger und Profis, Solingen ⁷2015.

Fritz Verdenhalven: Familienkundliches Wörterbuch, Neustadt an der Aisch ³1992.

Gazetteer

Gemeindelexikon für das Königreich Preußen, Bd. 10 (Provinz Westfalen. Mit einem Anhang betreffend die Fürstenthümer Waldeck und Pyrmont), Bd. 12 (Provinz Rheinland), Berlin 1887–1888.

Gemeindelexikon für den Freistaat Preußen, Bd. 11 (Provinz Westfalen), Berlin 1931.

Gemeinde-Lexikon für die Rheinprovinz und Hohenzollern, Köln 1937.

Müllers Großes Deutsches Ortsbuch. Vollständiges Ortslexikon, Berlin ³⁵2017.

Ortschafts-Verzeichnis des Fürstentums Lippe, Detmold 1906.

Ortschafts-Verzeichnis für die Rhein-Provinz, hg. von Schady, Köln 1851.

Guides to archival holdings

Die Zivilstandsregister und die Kirchenbuchduplikate im Nordrhein-Westfälischen Personenstandsarchiv Rheinland [*Rhineland civil status archives*]. Eine Übersicht, bearb. von Jörg Füchtner mit Sabine Degner, Karin Günter und Ingrid Riedel-Karp, erw. von Jörg Füchtner und Andrea Laueremann (Veröffentlichungen der staatlichen Archive des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen Reihe B Heft 8), ²Siegburg 1996.

Landesarchiv NRW. Abteilung Ostwestfalen-Lippe [*East Westphalia-Lippe division*]. Beständeübersicht, Redaktion: Gabriela Matthes und Lars Lükking (Veröffentlichungen des Landesarchivs Nordrhein-Westfalen 31), Düsseldorf 2010.

Die Bestände des Nordrhein-Westfälischen Personenstandsarchivs Westfalen-Lippe [*Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives*] bis 1874/75, bearb. von Günther Engelbert und Ilse Kötz, zweite, neu bearb. Auflage von Arno Schwinger unter Mitarbeit von Karin Eickmeier und Gabriele Hamann, hg. vom Nordrhein-Westfälischen Staatsarchiv Detmold (Veröffentlichungen der staatlichen Archive des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen Reihe B Heft 5), Detmold 1991.

Genealogy interlinked – useful addresses

People who undertake research are rarely on their own for long, since they like to swap tips, advice and research results and they establish virtual and personal contacts with others in order to obtain further information. You can find a selection of useful addresses in this regard here:

Ancestral research online

Numerous web pages provide information on ancestral research, but you should bear in mind:

- Online research is never enough on its own because a lot of information can (still) only be found in archives rather than online, and not all information is correct, nor is every provider trustworthy.
- Make sure you don't agree to pay a fee without realising it.

The following web pages may be of interest to you:

GenWiki: wiki-de.genealogy.net/Hauptseite

GEDBAS: gedbas.genealogy.net

Familysearch (Mormons): www.familysearch.org or www.igi-index.org (batch numbers)

Ancestry: www.ancestry.de or

www.ancestry.com (fee-based)

JewishGen: www.jewishgen.org

GOV: gov.genealogy.net (database of places)

Kartenmeister: www.kartenmeister.com

FOKO: foko.genealogy.net

Address books: adressbuecher.genealogy.net

Societies and networks

Family researchers and genealogists have come together to form numerous societies and networks. These include many groups dealing with specific issues. You should therefore ask the archives or your local heritage or history society for information.

Large societies in North Rhine-Westphalia:

Westdeutsche Gesellschaft für Familienkunde e. V. (West German Family Studies Society)

(www.wgff.net)

Westfälische Gesellschaft für Genealogie und Familienforschung (Westphalia Society for Genealogy and Family Research)

(www.genealogy.net/vereine/wggf)

Genealogischer Arbeitskreis im Naturwissenschaftlichen und Historischen Verein für das Land Lippe e. V. (Genealogical Work Group in the Natural Sciences and History Club of the State of Lippe)

(www.nhv-ahnenforschung.de)

Amerikanetz. Netzwerk westfälische Amerika-Auswanderung seit dem 19. Jahrhundert (Network for Westphalia to America emigration since the 19th century)

(www.amerikanetz.de)

Further societies and pages can be found on the GenWiki page (see above)

Providers of genealogical services

Sometimes it makes sense to hand the research over to a professional or to freelance historians or genealogists. Look for contacts in your archive or history club, or get advice from the Verband deutschsprachiger Berufsgenealogen (Association of German-speaking Professional Genealogists) (www.berufsgenealogie.net).

The civil status archives in North Rhine-Westphalia

Duplicate parish registers
from Lippe in the
Detmold archive stacks
(LAV NRW OWL P 1 A)



Register of deaths of the Mairie (city council) Ottersum (Kleve district) for the year XI / 1802 – 1803 (LAV NRW R PA 2105 Ottersum S An XI)



Both the North Rhine-Westphalia civil status archives are centres for family research, genealogy and any research relating to people, whether it's for biographies or for research into social, economic or demographic history. This is because they store documents which note the civil status of people who were born, married or died in the area of what is today the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW).

“Born”, “married”, “single”, “divorced”, and “deceased” describe the civil status of a person. In the past this was documented in → parish registers, → duplicate parish registers, → civil status registers, and registers of dissidents and Jews, and it is now documented in the registry offices' civil registers. These are accordingly civil status documents.

In the North Rhine-Westphalia civil status archives such documents, books and registers are stored centrally and are made available for research. In most of the collections within these specialised archives there are duplicates of the civil status registers, i.e.

the duplicate parish registers, the duplicate registers of births, marriages and deaths and registers of Jews and dissidents, as well as the secondary registers and/or duplicates of the registry offices' civil status registers. (Meanwhile the originals are held in the parishes (archives), municipal archives and the registry offices.) You can find out more about the collections in the following sections of this booklet.

Both of the North Rhine-Westphalia civil status archives whose history goes back to first half of the 20th century and which were set up as specialised archives by the newly established state of NRW are now departments within the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives: the Rhineland civil status archives is part of the Rhineland division in Duisburg. The civil status archives of Westphalia-Lippe is part of the East Westphalia-Lippe division in Detmold.

The tasks and collections of both of these specialised archives have changed as a result of the amending of the Civil Status Act

as from 1st January 2009: previously both archives kept the secondary civil registers from the period 1874/76 to 30th June 1938. Since 2009 the civil status archives have also taken over on a year by year basis the duplicate death registers which are more than 30 years old. As from 2019 further volumes of the duplicate register of marriage will be added, these are subject to an 80 year retention period. Once the retention periods have elapsed, the documents are made available for public use according to the provisions of the Archives Act.

The revision of this law raised the profile of the civil status archives, not least because completely new opportunities for private and academic research are now opened up. In addition, the reform of the Civil Status Act is prompting other federal states to set up civil status archives in line with the North Rhine-Westphalia model.

The Rhineland civil status archives in Duisburg and their holdings

New state archives building in Duisburg in the former granary of Rheinisch-Westfälische Speditionen-Gesellschaft/ RWSG
(Photo: Peter Fröhlich, NRW state archives)



The Rhineland civil status archives store and manage the state civil status records that have been handed down for the Rhineland area of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (Düsseldorf and Cologne administrative districts). Specifically these records are parish registers and duplicate parish registers, registers of births, marriages and deaths with associated registers of banns of marriage and supporting documentation files, as well as the registry offices' civil registers.

Following the transfer of the parish registers from Schloss Gracht in Liblar (now part of the town of Erftstadt) and of the other holdings from Ehrenbreitstein fortress in Koblenz to the north wing of Augustusburg Palace and its outbuildings in 1954/1955,

the civil status archives were stored at various sites in Brühl, and finally it was split between three buildings at the two sites in Comesstraße and Schlossstraße (Nordorangerie and outbuildings of Augustusburg Palace).

Since 2008 the Rhineland civil status archives have been kept as department R 4 forming part of the Rhineland division of the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives. After the various locations of the Rhineland division in Brühl and Düsseldorf were brought together at the new state archives building in Duisburg, the Rhineland civil status archives have been located in the Innenhafen area, not far from the Schwanentorbrücke.

Collections

Collection	Date	Form in which made available
Parish registers 4,315 parish registers and older duplicate parish registers	1571 – 1798/1809	Digital copies → “Edition Brühl”; microfiches (single volumes)
More recent duplicate parish registers 1,127 duplicate parish registers	1806/1813 – 1874	Microfiches
Register of births, marriages and deaths 106,473 duplicates of the registers of births, marriages and deaths, approx. 80,000 Banns registers and approx. 20,000 supporting documentation files	1796/1798 – 1875 (left bank of the Rhine) 1810 – 1875 (right bank of the Rhine)	Digital copies and originals; microfiches (ten-year tables)
Registry offices’ civil registers 126,235 secondary registers and duplicates	1874/1876 – 1938/1987	Digital copies and originals

Further holdings which may be of interest for family research:

The records handed down by the administrative authorities and courts in the area for which the Rhineland civil status archives is responsible are also kept in Duisburg and are the responsibility of the other departments within the Rhineland division. If your evaluation of the civil status documents provides you with promising pointers, for instance you have found out an ancestor’s occupation or who owned a farm, these sources may provide you with valuable additional information for research into your family.

A wide range of records can be considered for this. They range from collec-

tions relating to early modern territories, including their inheritance records detailing the ownership of farms or their valuation lists, to archival materials from more recent times. The latter generally summarise in the form of provenance holdings the records of archival value of a single government body, but some have been set up as comprehensive collective records. They may, for instance, contain personnel files or de-nazification records for members of your family.



Reading room in Duisburg
(Photo: kundn.de)

The Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives in Detmold and their holdings

Duplicate parish register
from Alswede dated 1837
(LAV NRW OWL
P 1 B Nr. 10)

Geborne		
Nr	Tauf-Name des K i n d e s.	Tag und Stunde der Geburt in Buchstaben und Ziffern. un
10	Christian Ludwig Gottlieb	Wienstein 9ten Januar Morg 3 Ubr
11	Paul Wilhelm Gottlieb	Wienstein 19ten Januar Abend 8 10 Ubr
12	Carl Friedrich Wilhelm August	Wienstein 22ten Januar Abend 8 Ubr
13	Carl Friedrich Gottlieb	Wienstein 24ten Januar Abend 11 Ubr

The Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives started operating in 1965 and it is one of the four departments within the East Westphalia-Lippe division of the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives. These specialised archives store civil status records from the whole of Westphalia and Lippe (i.e. from the current administrative districts of Münster, Detmold and Arnsberg). These records include parish registers, duplicate parish registers, registers of Jews and dissidents, and registers of births, marriages and deaths together with their certification files as well as registry office secondary registers and/or duplicates.

Our customers can also access the collections in all the other departments of the East Westphalia-Lippe division and of the Detmold town archives and the Lippe district archives. Researchers can therefore supplement the data from the registers of births, marriages and deaths with information from official records and the collections (e.g. collections of photos and maps) as well as personal papers of individuals from the area of the Detmold administrative district.

The records are organised according to the types of register and the administrative districts (RB):

Contents of records	Form of transmission	Date	Collection shelf number		
			RB Arnsberg	RB Detmold	RB Münster
134 parish registers from Lippe (Deposit of the Lippe regional church)	Original books for selected parishes, micro-fiches from all parishes, some digital copies of parish registers	1611 – 1969		L 112 A (only Lippe)	
approx. 6,000 duplicate parish registers and registers of births, marriages and deaths together with supporting documentation files	Original books, duplicates, some as microfiches, digitised for → “Edition Detmold”	(1670) 1779 – 1875	P 4	P 1 A Lippe P 1 B-D RB Minden	P 7
approx. 900 registers of Jews and dissidents together with supporting documentation files	Original books, duplicates, digitised for → “Edition Detmold”	(1801) 1808 – 1874	P 5	P 2	P 8
Lists of parishioners and cemeteries of Jewish parishes (50 items)	Reproductions from the Reichssippenamt (Reich Office of Genealogy)	1697 – 1942	P 10	P 10	P 10
approx. 170,000 (up to 1987)* registry offices’ civil registers	Secondary registers and duplicates	1874 – 1938	P 6	P 3	P 9
		1938 – 1987*	P 16	P 13	P 19

* In 2018 the duplicate death registers are available up to the year 1987. Each year a further another volume of registers is delivered to the civil status archives.

Further collections which may also be of interest for your family research:

➤ Genealogical collections: Bequests from genealogists which collate a wealth of personal information, usually from the 20th century (e.g. collection D 77 Brenker, D 77 Schering)

➤ Legal collections handed down: wardships, wills, bequests, inheritances, adoptions, declarations of death (e.g. collections L 90 for Lippe in the 18th and 19th centuries, M 9 regional and municipal courts in the Minden administrative district 1815 – 1879, M 8 Paderborn higher regional court/court of

appeals 1815 – 1879, and D 23 district courts in the Detmold administrative district since 1879)

➤ Civil service personnel files for the area covering what is now the Detmold administrative district (see collections L 80 I Pers, M 1 PrPers and D 99)

➤ Immigration and emigration files (e.g. collections L 77 A and D 1)

➤ Official minutes and minutes of municipal courts, marriage and wardship minutes for Lippe from the 16th to 19th centuries (collection L 108 A)

➤ Property and land registers provide infor-

mation about village, farming and family history for Lippe from the 16th to 19th century (collection L 101 C I)

This small selection should encourage you to widen your search in the archive and to add new sources. You can find out which archival materials may be of use to you

➤ by asking yourself in which authorities your ancestors may have been “on record”,

➤ by studying the Guide to holdings for an archive, and

➤ by seeking advice.

What are parish registers, duplicate parish registers, registers of births, marriages and deaths, and civil status registers?

Decree dated 1779 issued by the archbishop of Cologne, Maximilian Friedrich, ordering the establishing of duplicate parish registers, sewn into a duplicate parish register from Arnsberg dating from 1779 – 1800 (LAV NRW OWL P 4 Nr. 441)



Marriage register of the Landbürgermeisterei (association of boroughs) Rheinbach (district of the Bonn regional court) for the year 1863 (LAV NRW R PA 2102 Rheinbach H 1863)

A small study of sources

Duplicate parish registers, civil status registers, registers of Jews and dissidents, registry office original records and duplicates as well as – even if they are not set up for this purpose – parish registers provide legally valid documentation of a person's civil status. They record changes in civil status, e.g. the birth, marriage or death of a person. Links (Hinweise) introduced in the Free State of Prussia in 1926 can also provide you with information about a person's or married couple's children.

Parish registers

Since the Middle Ages, the church has overseen and documented changes in the relationships of its members which affect their civil status, starting with weddings and baptisms. In the 16th century, the catholic church in the Council of Trent (1563) and the protestant church in sovereign church ordinances, established rules for the keeping of parish registers. It was at this time that par-

ish registers started to be handed down, as also happened in the case of the Rhineland civil status archives (1571) and the Detmold archives (1611). In the Rhineland the keeping of the parish registers in these state archives dates back to the French decrees or those of the Grand Ducky of Berg as part of the introduction of defined civil status around 1800. The parish registers in the Detmold archives are a deposit of the archives of the Lippe regional church.

Today the churches do of course still keep parish registers, but they no longer have the legally binding force that state civil status registers have. The parish registers contain information about baptisms, marriages and burials of parishioners. These entries are usually supplemented with a lot of additional information, such as godparents, witnesses to a marriage, or causes of death, and occasionally also with information relating to the emigration of family members or even to events in the parish community.

berg, Graf zu Königsegg = Rottentfels, Herr zu Odentir-
chen, Borkeloh, Berth, Mulendorf und Stauffen 2c. 2c.
Demnach Uns mehrmalen höchst mißfällig vorgekommen, daß die Berecheli-
gungs- Tauf- und Sterbbücher an vielen Orten oder vernachlässiget, oder durch
Feuersbrunst und sonstige Zufälle gar verloren worden, und dann dem ge-
meinen Wesen dadurch großer Nachtheil zugewachsen, als haben um solchem Un-
wesen vorzubeugen nöthig gefunden, in Befolg tragenden Erzbischöflichen Amts
hierunter gemessene Vorsehung zu thun, und zu verordnen:

Verordnen auch hiemit gnädigst

Item: In jeder Pfarr- und Pöblich-Kirche, wo der Tauf vorfindlich, sollen
gleich nach Erhaltung dieses drey besondere Bücher in Bogenform aus Kir-
chen = und wo solche nicht hinreichen, aus gemeinen Mitteln angeschafft,
und mit der Ueberschrift: Tauf- Copulations- und Sterb-Buch
versehen werden.

Duplicate parish registers and registers of births, marriages and deaths

In the modern era, especially in the 18th century, states began to exercise greater control over the civil registries and they issued parish register regulations and specified that back up copies must be drawn up. Ever since then, there has always been a copy of every civil status register, which is usually stored in a different archive to the original. This involvement by the state varied greatly between regions and territories.

- Already in 1779 Maximilian Friedrich the archbishop of Cologne decreed that in the areas of Westphalia under his control (the duchy of Westphalia and the Vest Recklinghausen) duplicate parish registers were to be drawn up – separately for baptisms, marriages and burials. About 15 years later the General State Laws for the Prussian States of 1794 specified that clerics in particular had to draw up duplicate parish registers and deliver them to the relevant court after a period of one year. In Lippe, duplicate par-

ish registers had been kept since 17th century; these had to be delivered to the church consistory and they are ecclesiastical documents. The corresponding collection (P 1 A) in the Detmold civil status archives is therefore a deposit of the archives of the Lippe regional church.

- The keeping of registers of births, marriages and deaths (originals and duplicates) dates back to the French legislation of 1792. This was inured in the area on the left bank of the Rhine in 1798. The provisions that were incorporated into the Code Civil in 1804 came into force on the right bank of the Rhine extending as far as the Westphalia region as from 1808 (Kingdom of Westphalia), and as from 1810 (Grand Duchy of Berg) and 1811 (French Départements to the east of the Rhine). The original was to remain in the parish while the duplicate was to be supplied to the lower judicial authority. Today, the original books are generally held by local authorities, i.e. in the municipal archives or at the registry offices, and the duplicates

were moved from the courts to the state archives. In many cases registers of births, marriages and deaths are also preserved in church archives. The central and largest collections of registers of births, marriages and deaths in modern North Rhine-Westphalia are in the Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives.

- After the end of French rule in 1815, the General State Laws for the Prussian States were re-enacted in Westphalia and on the right bank of the lower Rhine, whilst the French administrative regulations regarding the civil registry continued to apply in large parts of the Rhineland. In the Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives you will only find registers of births, marriages and deaths for the years 1808 – 1814, otherwise you should use the duplicate parish registers for the period up to 1874. In the Rhineland civil status archives on the other hand, it is mainly registers of births, marriages and deaths that are stored.



Registers of Jews
from Hilchenbach for
the years 1865 – 1872
(LAV NRW OWL P 5 Nr. 23)

Registers of Jews and dissidents

In the 19th century, state interest in civil status increasingly extended to non-Christians or people who were not members of the established churches, and in particular to Jews, dissidents and Quakers. The introduction of registers of Jews varied from area to area: in the French-dominated Kingdom of Westphalia separate civil status registers of births, marriages and deaths were kept for Jews, whereas this was not the case in the Grand Duchy of Berg. In the area of the Duchy of Westphalia, former part of the Electorate of Cologne and then secularized by the Grand Duchy of Hesse, the decree of 1804 applied, which stated that the vicars had to keep separate registers of Jews. In Lippe this was decreed in 1809. In the Prussian era from 1815 onwards the keeping of registers of Jews also varied, until in 1822 and 1847 regulations were introduced which harmonised the keeping of registers of Jews. This meant that the registers of Jews had to be submitted to the courts. Similar provisions applied as from 1847 to Quakers and dissi-

dents (“tolerated religious communities”). The introduction of the registry office system and Civil Status Acts in 1874/75 brought to an end the keeping of separate registers for different denominations.

In the Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives researchers have centralised access to numerous registers of Jews covering a large region – something that is virtually unparalleled elsewhere. By contrast, separate registers of Jewish people were not kept for the Rhineland areas. Books of names in the Napoleonic era which certified the adoption of fixed family names by Jewish citizens are assigned in the Rhineland civil status archives to the collections of parish registers.

Name indices

Most of these registers contain indices of names.

Supporting documentation and consignment related files

Also kept in the civil status archives are supporting documentation regarding certifica-

tion processes and files related to the consignment of the official paperwork relating to the duplicate parish registers, registers of births, marriages and deaths, and registers of Jews, which contain additional documents, e.g. about marriages.

Reichssippenamt reproductions

As from 1938 the “Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung”, later Reichssippenamt (Reich Office for Genealogy) dealt with the personal documents of Jewish communities, and it centralised them and made microfiches of them. The originals, but also numerous microfiches, have been destroyed or lost. The microfiches are stored in Detmold (“Gaterman films”) together with re-enlarged versions of them, in particular of Jewish birth, marriage and death registers, and lists of cemeteries or membership lists of Jewish communities. This repository is particularly valuable owing to the length of time that it covers (1697–1942) and because it holds data for the whole of Westphalia-Lippe.

21

Reichs-Gesetzblatt.

N^o 4.

Inhalt: Gesetz über die Beurkundung des Personenstandes *re.* S. 23.

(Nr. 1040.) Gesetz über die Beurkundung des Personenstandes und die Eheschließung.
Vom 6. Februar 1875.

Wir Wilhelm, von Gottes Gnaden Deutscher Kaiser, König
von Preußen *re.*

verordnen im Namen des Deutschen Reichs, nach erfolgter Zustimmung des
Bundesraths und des Reichstags, was folgt:

Erster Abschnitt.

Allgemeine Bestimmungen.

§. 1.

Die Beurkundung der Geburten, Heirathen und Sterbefälle erfolgt ausschließlich durch die vom Staate bestellten Standesbeamten mittels Eintragung in die dazu bestimmten Register.

§. 2.

Die Bildung der Standesamtsbezirke erfolgt durch die höhere Verwaltungsbehörde.

Die Standesamtsbezirke können aus einer oder mehreren Gemeinden gebildet, größere Gemeinden in mehrere Standesamtsbezirke getheilt werden.

§. 3.

Für jeden Standesamtsbezirk ist ein Standesbeamter und mindestens ein Stellvertreter zu bestellen. Für den Fall vorübergehender Behinderung oder gleichzeitiger Erledigung des Amtes des Standesbeamten und der Stellvertreter ist die nächste Aufsichtsbehörde ermächtigt, die einstweilige Beurkundung des Personenstandes einem benachbarten Standesbeamten oder Stellvertreter zu übertragen.

Die Bestellung erfolgt, soweit nicht im §. 4 ein Anderes bestimmt ist, durch die höhere Verwaltungsbehörde.

Reichs-Gesetzbl. 1875.

7

Ausgegeben zu Berlin den 9. Februar 1875.

Reichsgesetzblatt
(Reich Law Gazette)
dated 1875: Gesetz über
die Beurkundung des
Personenstandes und
die Eheschließung (Reg-
istration of Civil Status
and Marriage Act)



Civil status registers

The Civil Status Acts that were enforced in Prussia in 1874 (applicable as from October 1874) and throughout the empire dated 1875 (applicable as from January 1876) marked the introduction of the registry office system and the documenting of civil status by the government in a uniform manner, and for all denominations. In Prussian areas (except the area under French or Rhenisch law) there are civil status registers, which were maintained separately for births, marriages and deaths, as from 1874, and throughout the empire (e.g. including Lippe) as from 1876.

The registers are kept in duplicate, i.e. main and secondary registers or original and duplicate, and they are stored at separate locations. Since 1928 directories of names have to be kept for both types of records. The nature and scope of the information that is recorded in the individual documents has varied over the years depending on the legal provisions that have applied at

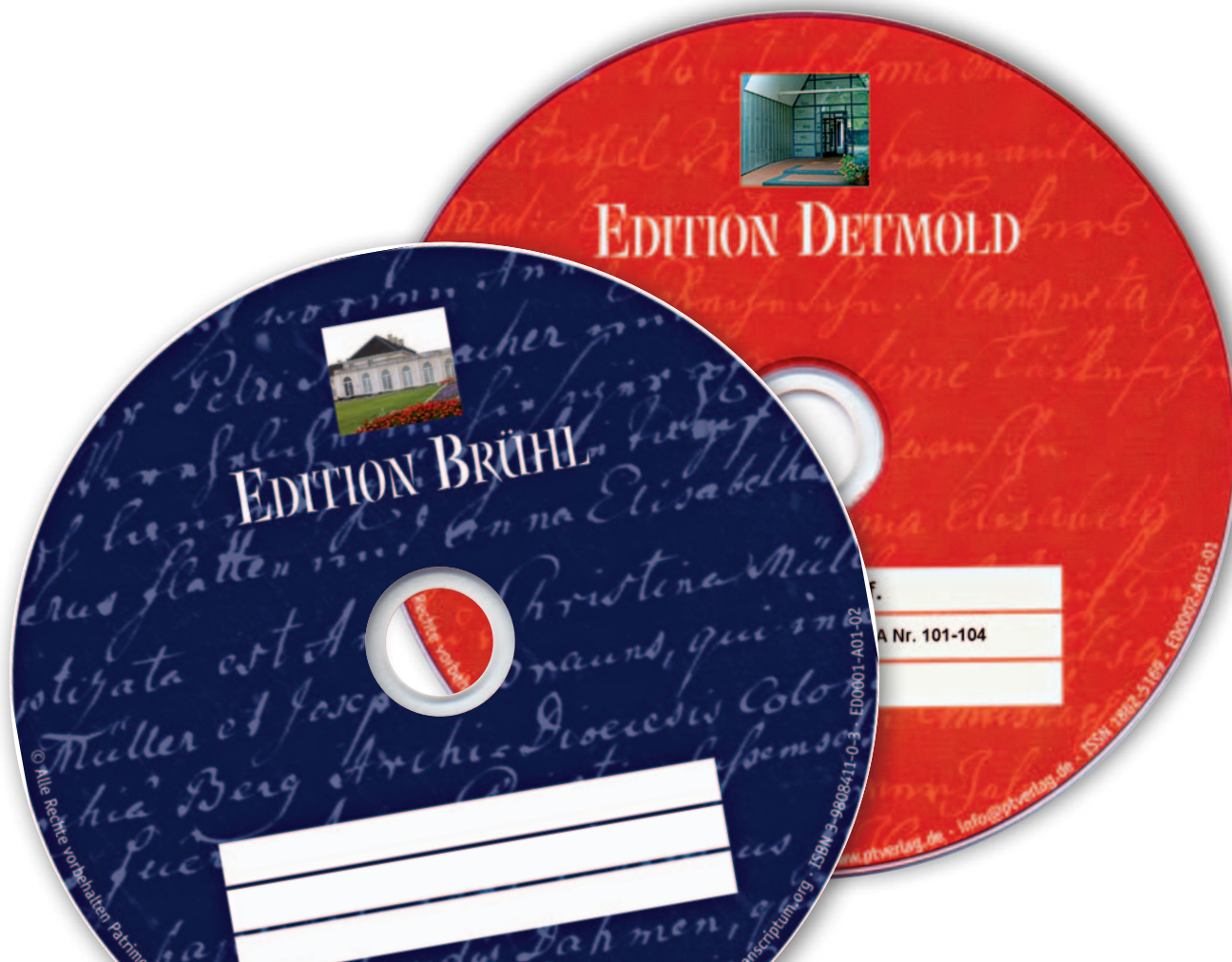
different times in relation to the keeping of civil status records. The most radical changes to the forms were made in July 1920, July 1938, January 1958 and January 2009.

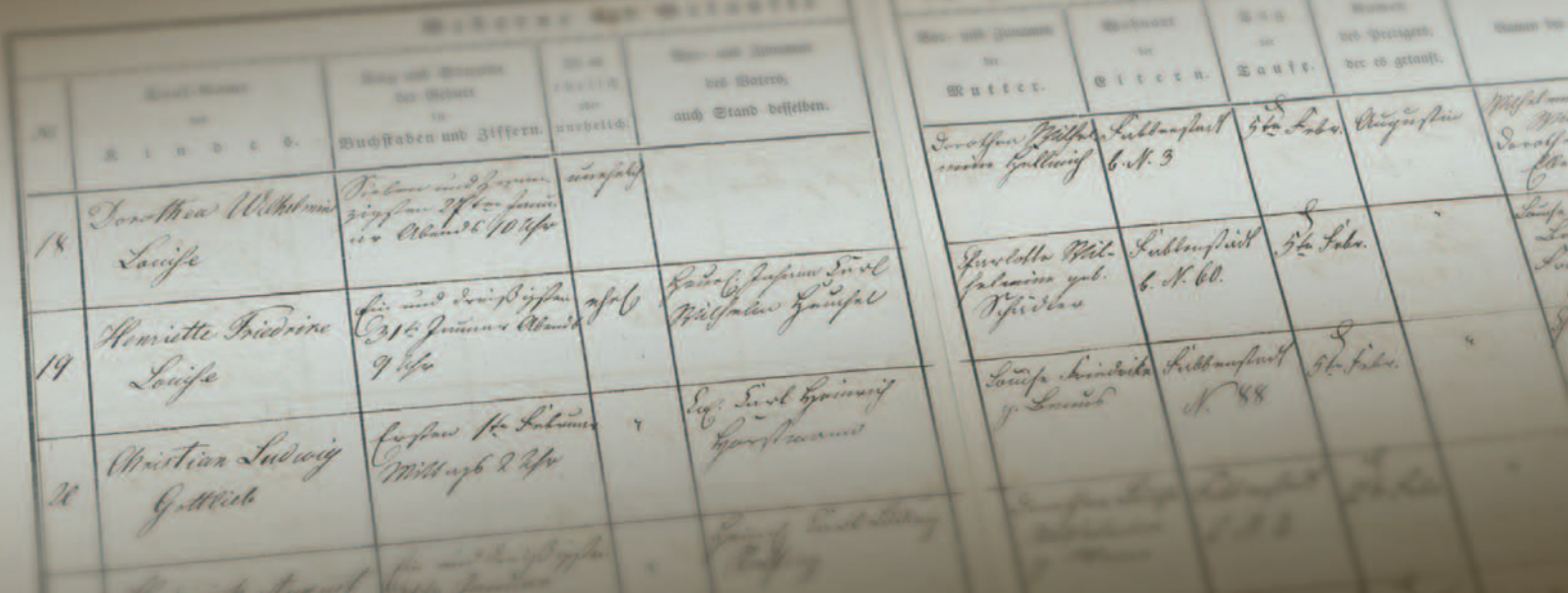
The originals were stored at the relevant registry office, the duplicates at the immediate registry office supervisory offices in the rural districts and the independent towns. However, after the Second World War it was specified that in North Rhine-Westphalia the duplicate records from the period 1874 to 30th June 1938 would be stored in the newly established civil status archives in Brühl and Detmold. Until 31st December 2008 they could only be made available for use on a restricted basis. The amended Civil Status Act that is applicable as from 1st January 2009 now lays down freer conditions of use (→ see page 29 Legal considerations) and it specifies new rules on the continued transfer of civil status registers to the archives (→ see page 13).

Secondary civil status registers from Dortmund (LAV NRW OWL P 6)

Using the “Edition Brühl” and “Edition Detmold” to search for your ancestors

Duplicate parish
register from
Alswede dated 1837
(LAV NRW OWL
P 1 B Nr. 10)





The “Edition Brühl” (since 2004) and the “Edition Detmold” (since 2006) provide family researchers and historians with archival material on DVD – specifically: parish registers and duplicate parish registers as well as registers of births, marriages and deaths and supporting documentation files from the era of the Confederation of the Rhine. The “Edition Brühl” mainly consists of parish registers covering a geographical area equivalent to the current administrative districts of Cologne and Düsseldorf. The “Edition Detmold” publishes duplicate parish registers and registers of births, marriages and deaths, primarily covering today’s administrative district of Detmold.

The publishing company Patrimonium Transcriptum (PT-Verlags GmbH) has developed an innovative means of presentation for archival material in cooperation with the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives and both of its civil status archives. The series of digitised registers contain detailed academic descriptions of the content as well as

the digital images of the archival materials. In individual cases indices are also included, ranging from registers of names to partial copies of the parish registers.

With these digitised versions the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives and the publisher wish to highlight the important sources for family research and for the academic study of history, and to make them available in a digital and transportable format.

The DVDs are designed for use on conventional computers and laptops and they provide a navigation screen that the user can use to leaf through a digital book. The digital copies are stored as jpg and pdf files so that they can be viewed with any browser and image display program and they can be printed out.

The “Edition Brühl” now includes 235 titles, 41 of which contain indices. The periods covered extend from the end of the 16th century almost to the beginning of the 19th century. So far the “Edition Detmold” con-

tains 109 titles relating to numerous parishes in the administrative district of Detmold. It documents events from the 19th century, and also in some cases the 18th century (titles as at September 2018).

The DVDs can only be obtained by ordering them online from the publisher. On the publisher’s webpage you can find precise information about the products, their contents, and current offers:

Patrimonium Transcriptum
Verlags GmbH
Oppenhoffstraße 16
D-53111 Bonn

Phone: +49/228/3772-685
Fax: +49/228/3772-686

www.ptverlag.de
info@ptverlag.de

The “indexing” project of the Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives



“Indexing” is the term used to refer to the copying of the entries from parish registers, duplicate parish registers and registers of births, marriages and deaths, originally onto index cards, and now into a database or into database-compatible programs. Although the recording of the contents of civil status registers is not the job of archives and cannot be achieved by them, family researchers like to be able to have civil status data automatically searched through.

That is why archive clients with an interest in genealogy and local history can usefully get involved by recording and publishing this information themselves in cooperation with the archives. There are now many family researchers who are entering the full contents of the civil status registers into databases, and consequently making it easily available for research purposes.

Are you interested in doing this? Would you like to get involved?

How is it done?

➤ If you would like to contribute, get in touch with the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives, East Westphalia-Lippe division and

find out if someone else is already working on the parish that you are interested in. You may actually find an “indexing partner”.

➤ Once you have agreed the arrangements, you will receive the digitised duplicate parish registers and registers of births, marriages and deaths, i.e. JPEG files on a DVD. You will be provided with them without charge, exclusively for your purposes and only for your personal use. In addition, you will be given tips by the archives on how to record the data and/or template tables.

➤ In a declaration you must undertake not to pass on the image files, and to submit the result of your work to the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives, division East Westphalia-Lippe.

➤ You will of course be given assistance if you want it.

➤ If you like, you can also work together with one or more people on a parish’s records, and you can help each other and therefore get to know partners who can share the work involved as well as the results of your family research. In order for this to happen, all the people involved must sign the declaration referred to above.

Glossary

- Archiv (Archives):** Institution or organisation which records, indexes, receives and provides access to the archival material.
- Archivale (Archival document):** Generic term for individual units in the holding, for instance a file or a certificate.
- Archivgut (Archival material):** Generic term for all the archivalia within an archive. This term includes any records of archival value, in particular those issued by administrative bodies.
- Benutzung (Use):** Inspection of an archive's holdings for personal, legal or academic purposes. This requires the submission of a application form for readers.
- Benutzungsordnung (Access regulations):** Regulation which is issued based on archive legislation and which governs the usage and their conditions for an archive. The access regulations can be obtained for inspection from the reading room supervisory staff. By signing the application form for readers you commit yourself to adhering to it.
- Bestand (Holding):** A coherent group of archival material, usually from a single authority.
- Beständeübersicht (Guide to holdings):** A listing of the holdings within an archive, with explanations relating to their form and content, e.g. subject matter, periods covered, scope, freedom of access, history of the authority, history of the holding and structure of its contents → Tektonik (Plan of record groups).
- Bestellschein (Request form):** Form for ordering archival materials from the stack in the reading room.
- Depositum (Deposit):** Documents handed over by private individuals or institutions to an archive for the correct provision of access and for storage and use without any transfer of ownership.
- Findbuch (Finding aid):** Register of the archive units comprising a holding. The structure of the finding aid reflects the internal structure of the corresponding holdings → Klassifikation (Classification).
- Klassifikation (Classification):** Organisation of a holding into content groupings with the aim of bringing together related archival units, usually within a single administrative unit.
- Laufzeit (Date of creation):** Stated start and end date of the creation of a record unit.
- Paginierung (Pagination):** Appending of a page or sheet numbering system to archival material, often using a sequential numbering stamp.
- Pertinenz (Pertinence):** Structuring of archival holdings based on territorial, personal or material considerations without regard to the context of the creation of these documents.
- Provenienz (Provenance = "origin"):** The principle of provenance describes the system which is usually used today for structuring archival materials according to their origin, generally based on the authorities which supply them.
- Repertorium (Repertory):** Former term for the Findbuch (Finding aid).
- Signatur (Reference code):** Marking for identifying individual archival materials and linking them with the finding aids. They also specify the storage sequence within the stacks.
- Sprengel (Jurisdiction of archives):** Geographical extent of the area of responsibility of an archive.
- Tektonik (Plan of record groups):** Organisation of the overarching structure of all holdings within an archive into classes or archival departments, nowadays usually based on → Provenienz (Provenance), formerly also based on subject matter.
- Verzeichnung (Archival description):** Part of the indexing activity. It consists of the allocation of a reference code and file titles, the specifying of the date, and the establishing a structure.

The services provided by the Rhineland and Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives



Reading room in Detmold (Photo: Matthias Schultes, NRW state archives)

The NRW state archives is a service provider which makes archival materials i.e. historical documents, available to citizens. The documents may be used as evidence or for the clarification of legal circumstances or personal queries, for researching family history or the history of a town, a company or a street, and also for academic research.

You are warmly invited to come to the archives!

The NRW state archives is primarily intended to be used for personal research in the reading rooms at its Detmold, Duisburg and Münster sites. You don't have to provide advance notice that you are coming. However, it is advisable to prepare your visit carefully, e.g. by obtaining information online or by getting in touch directly (→ Step by step, page 6–8). In the reading room our archives staff will be happy to assist you by providing personal advice.

The reading rooms

The reading room of the Rhineland division, and consequently of the Rhineland civil status archives in Duisburg, has 100 workstations. Of these, 40 workstations are equipped with PCs for using and printing digitised documents, and 6 workstations are equipped with microfiche scanners. There is free access to a reference library which is set up in the reading room; archives library books that you order will be provided for you in the reading room.

The reading room of the East Westphalia-Lippe division, and consequently of the Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives in Detmold, has 35 workstations, most of which are linked to devices for viewing films or microfiches. A computer can be connected up at any workstation. In the reference library there are roughly 1,200 freely accessible volumes; use of the archives library should be arranged via the reading room supervisory staff.

In many cases the civil status documents that you want to view are provided for you to use in a substitute form for conservation reasons, such as a digital copy or a microfiche. Feel free to make copies from them as you wish.

You can also direct your enquiries to us.

Please submit them in writing, not least in order to avoid misunderstandings. However, please bear in mind that the archives can generally only provide information about the holdings and the research options. By contrast, only in exceptional cases the archives staff can manage to undertake research in archival materials, e.g. on individual people. The length of time of such research is always limited to a maximum of one hour so that all enquiries can be answered within a reasonable timeframe. Fees may be charged for the work involved (see below).

If for personal reasons or because you would have a long way to come you are unable to use the reading room in person, you can appoint professional genealogists to undertake the research (see page 11).

Legal considerations

The basis for using the North Rhine-Westphalia state archives is the 2010 North Rhine-Westphalia Archives Act which was last amended in 2014, as well as the North Rhine-Westphalia archival access and fees regulations dated 29th May 2015. In addition, research in the registry offices' civil registers is also subject to the Civil Status Act of 19th February 2007 (see www.archive.nrw.de > Landesarchiv NRW > Wir über uns > Rechtsgrundlagen).

The registry offices' civil registers can be used in the North Rhine-Westphalia civil sta-

tus archives on the basis of archive law once the retention periods specified under civil status legislation have elapsed:

- > death registers after 30 years
- > marriage registers and civil partnership registers after 80 years
- > registers of births after 110 years.

If the stated retention periods have not yet elapsed, the Civil Status Act provides options for viewing the civil status registers subject to the following conditions.

> As well as the person to whom the civil status register entry relates, and his/her spouses or life partners and direct ancestors and descendants, now brothers and sisters of the child and/or the deceased person may apply for information contained in the birth and death registers. The applicant must be at least 16 years old.

> If at least 30 years have elapsed since the death of the last person entered in the civil status register in question (the child and its parents in the case of the register of births and the spouses in the case of the marriage register), an application can be made based on the use of the justified right to undertake private family research.

> If a person undertakes research projects at a recognised institution, he or she may – with the agreement of the responsible senior federal or state authority – apply to use the civil status archives before the retention periods have expired.

In order to protect individuals' rights to privacy, the archival materials can only be viewed by the public following the expiry of specified periods:

- > subject files after 30 years
- > archival materials relating to people: 10 years after the death of the person(s) concerned; if the date of death is unknown, 100 years after his/her birth; if neither the date of

birth or death is known, a protection period of 60 years applies as from the inception of the files.

> Archival materials which are subject to special non-disclosure rules (e.g. tax secrecy): after 60 years.

Fees

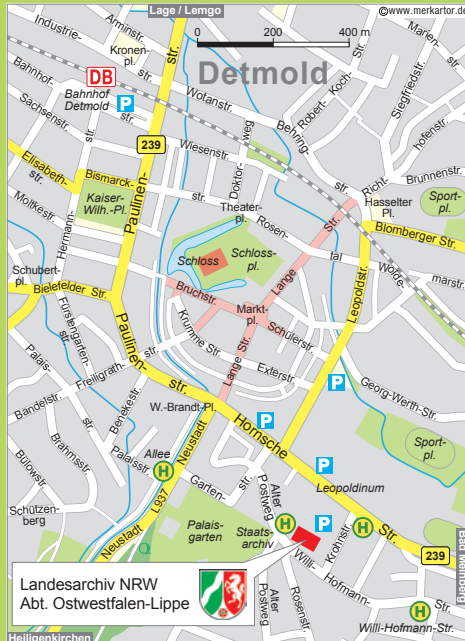
There is no charge for the use of finding aids and archival material in the reading rooms of the state archives.

There are no charges for the answering of written queries or for advice provided in the reading room if the work involved takes less than 30 minutes. In most cases this means that the answering of queries and the provision of advice is free. In the case of more time-consuming research and advice, fees are charged at € 30 for each half hour of work time or part thereof.

The creation of reproductions and any certification of them is always associated with fees. More detailed information about the level of the fees can be found in the archival use and fees regulations (see www.archive.nrw.de > Informationen für Benutzer > Gebühren).

This is how to contact us: our contact details

Detmold



The Westphalia-Lippe civil status archives
is a department within the East Westphalia-Lippe division
of the NRW state archives:

Landesarchiv NRW
Abteilung Ostwestfalen-Lippe
Willi-Hofmann-Straße 2
D-32756 Detmold
Phone: +49/5231/766-0 | Fax: +49/5231/766-114
Email: owl@lav.nrw.de | Internet: www.lav.nrw.de

Access via public transport:

From Detmold station: Bus routes 702 (Meiersfeld), 709 (Gilde),
772 and 780 (Horn-Bad Meinberg) to Leopoldinum stop, or route
707 to Staatsarchiv stop (every hour).

On foot through the town from the station approx. 25 – 30 minutes

Reading room opening times:

Mon.	8:00 – 19:00 Uhr
Tues. – Thurs.	8:00 – 16:00 Uhr
Fri.	8:00 – 13:00 Uhr



Duisburg

The Rhineland civil status archives is a department within the Rhineland division of the NRW state archives:

Landesarchiv NRW
 Abteilung Rheinland
 Personenstandsarchiv Rheinland
 Schifferstraße 30
 D-47059 Duisburg
 Phone: +49/203/98721-0 | Fax: +49/203/98721-111
 Email: rheinland@lav.nrw.de | Internet: www.lav.nrw.de

Access via public transport:

Take tram 901 (in the direction of Scholtenhofstraße/Obermarxloh) from the main station to the “Landesarchiv NRW” stop. The entrance is on the harbour side; on foot from the tram stop approx. 3 minutes.

Free parking spaces for visitors to the state archives are available at Schifferstraße 52.

Reading room opening times:

Mon. – Tues. 8:30 – 19:00 Uhr
 Weds. – Thurs. 8:30 – 16:00 Uhr
 Fri. 8:30 – 12:30 Uhr

Ordering of archival materials:

Mon. – Tues. 9:30, 11:30, 13:30 and 15:30 Uhr
 Weds. – Thurs. 9:30, 11:30 and 13:30 Uhr
 Fri. 10:00 Uhr

