



The  
Federal Archives



# Memory of Society

The Federal Archives at a glance

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#### Repository in Koblenz

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0202-006/  
Nobel, Jürgen

## Foreword

Seventy years after our founding, the mission of the Federal Archives is more relevant than ever. Our work revolves around securing and indexing important collections that constitute the memory of our society. By opening up access to these sources for everyone, we not only help to counter fake news with reliable and authentic information, but also make a crucial contribution to the open-ended research of German history.

With this perspective, the Federal Archives considers itself both a national and international bulwark against any form of historical falsification. Due to the fact that archives hold sources that underlie the self-perception of a country, they are misused in times of war or in autocratic regimes for propaganda purposes.

After having assumed responsibility for the records of the state security service of the former German Democratic Republic on 17 June 2021, the Federal Archives has now become the largest cultural institution in Germany with around 2,300 members of staff. At 23 locations, in addition to other sources, 540 kilometres of files are stored – equivalent to the driving distance between Berlin and Frankfurt am Main.

The work of the Federal Archives is shaped to a significant degree by its users. Meanwhile taken for granted by many, its service continuously needs to keep pace with the times. In recent years, the Federal Archives has taken a major step forwards particularly with the expansion of its digital offering.

This information brochure provides an insight into the wide range of files, photos, films and audio resources we store. With this wealth of archive material, the Federal Archives provides a key contribution to historical awareness, an active culture of memory and democratic participation.

Prof. Dr. Michael Hollmann  
President of the Federal Archives



**Prof. Dr. Michael Hollmann,**  
**President of the Federal Archives**  
photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0220-049/  
Nobel, Jürgen

## Tasks

### Who we are

Which words did resistance fighter Hans Scholl say before his execution by the National Socialists? Where was grandfather deployed in the Second World War? What concerns did the federal cabinet have as the Berlin Wall fell? How did the secret police of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) monitor its citizens? How did the Federal Training Assistance Act ("BAFöG") come into being? The sources held in the Federal Archives offer information on these questions and many more. They establish bridges between the past and present and the future. In this way, they help us to better understand history and bring it to life.

The Federal Archives stands for open access to the archive material, which invites users to form a differentiated and, above all, their own view of German history. In doing so, it clearly sets itself apart from the state-controlled politics of memory pursued in other countries. Founded in 1952, the Federal Archive stores archival material primarily produced at central institutions of the German Confederation (1815-1866), the German Reich (1867/71-1945), the zones of occupation (1945-1949), the German Democratic Republic (1949-1990) and the Federal Republic of Germany (since 1949).

Besides state sources, the Federal Archive also contains the legacies of prominent figures as well as the documents of parties, associations and organisations of national importance. Not only files but also photos, maps, films and sound materials in analogue and digital form are held in the archives. The Federal Archives is tasked with securing these historical testimonies in perpetuity and opening up access to them for those interested.

In January 2019, the Federal Archives took over the Wehrmacht information office (WAST), forming the "Department Information on Personal Data related to World Wars I and II", which provides information on former members of the armed forces and helps to investigate their fates.



#### Warsaw Genuflection: Federal Chancellor Willy Brandt commemorates the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1970

source: Bundesregierung, B 145 Bild-00004655/Reineke, Engelbert



#### Patent document for a projection apparatus (bioscope) of the Skladanowsky brothers dated 1895

source: BArch, N 1435/192





On 17 June 2021, the Federal Archives also took responsibility for the records of the state security service of the former GDR. On the basis of the Stasi Records Act (StUG), the archive enables citizens, researchers and media to continue to have the ability to examine records, a right hard won in the Peaceful Revolution. The materials stored in the Stasi Records Archive document how the Ministry for State Security systematically spied on and threatened people.

### National and international networks

The Federal Archives maintains links with many archives and institutions dedicated to regular discussion within Germany and abroad through exchange, shared projects, networks or formal cooperations. Besides coordination with the state archives of the federal states, these links notably include close relations with Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Arolsen Archives and the European Network of Authorities Responsible for Secret Police Files.

## What is “archival value”?

Day by day, information is produced in the Federal Chancellery, Federal Presidential Office, ministries and other federal bodies, which finds its way into the records. This archival material sums up to several kilometres every year. The authorities offer these documents to the Federal Archives when they no longer need them. But not all files are important enough to warrant archiving in perpetuity. For this reason, the archivists evaluate the documents received: Would archiving these documents provide a lasting value for better researching and understanding history and the present? Do they concern the important interests of citizens? Do the legislature, administration or judicature require this information? If this is the case, these documents will be stored permanently. They are considered to be of “archival value”. All others may be destroyed.



⬅  
**Tour of the repository in  
Berlin-Lichtenberg**  
photo: BStU/Herud

⬆  
**Delivery of a submission from the  
federal administration**  
photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2020-1020-009/  
Nobel, Jürgen

There are exceptions. For instance, the archived material of the former Ministry for State Security is not subject to this practice. Similarly, for example, records from the Third Reich are preserved in their entirety. Creating public access to archival documents and providing related information facilitates understanding of political decisions and historical developments. The Federal Archives thus considers itself bound to provide the greatest possible transparency over state activity – an important precondition for democratic participation.



↑  
President Michael Hollmann welcomes Cultural Secretary Claudia Roth to Berlin-Lichterfelde in May 2022. As a higher federal authority, the Federal Archives belongs to the division of the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media.

photo: BArch/Witzel

## Indexing

The records in the archives can only be found once they have been suitably indexed. Indexing means that every piece of information, such as a file or photo, is given a signature. This signature contains key information including time of origin, context and title, as well as the body from which it originates. The aim of this process is to make it possible to find and query the archival material.

In the case of more recent entries, this information is typically already provided by the submitting body and automatically scanned into the system. By recording this data in our own archive management software, the documents relevant to a given query can be found and made available in the reading rooms of the Federal Archives or digitally.



**Important information is recorded to make it possible to query the archive material.**

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2020-1014-018/  
Nobel, Jürgen



# Use

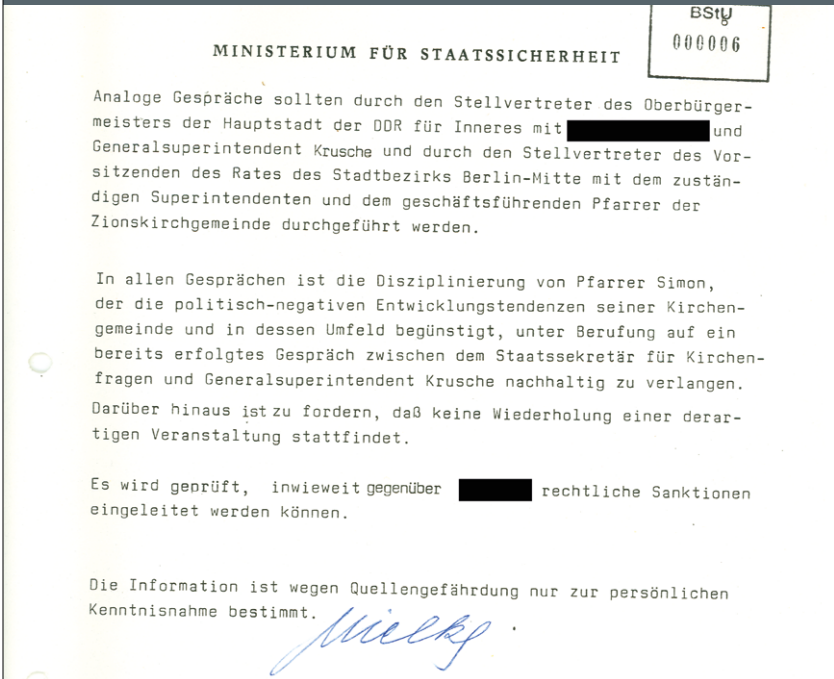
The accessibility of the stored and indexed records is a core part of the Federal Archives' work. Everyone has the right to use the Federal Archives' material upon request. The specific access requirements are determined by the Federal Archives Act and, in the case of the Stasi records, by the Stasi Records Act. In some cases, the use of records may be subject to a fee.

## Federal Archives Act

The Federal Archives Act ensures that all documents of lasting value produced in the administrative bodies and offices of the federation are preserved in the Federal Archives. Everyone is granted access to the federal archive material, restricted only by protection periods, personality rights and other third-party concerns. The retention periods are sometimes a number of years or decades, but can be reduced upon request.

## Stasi Records Act

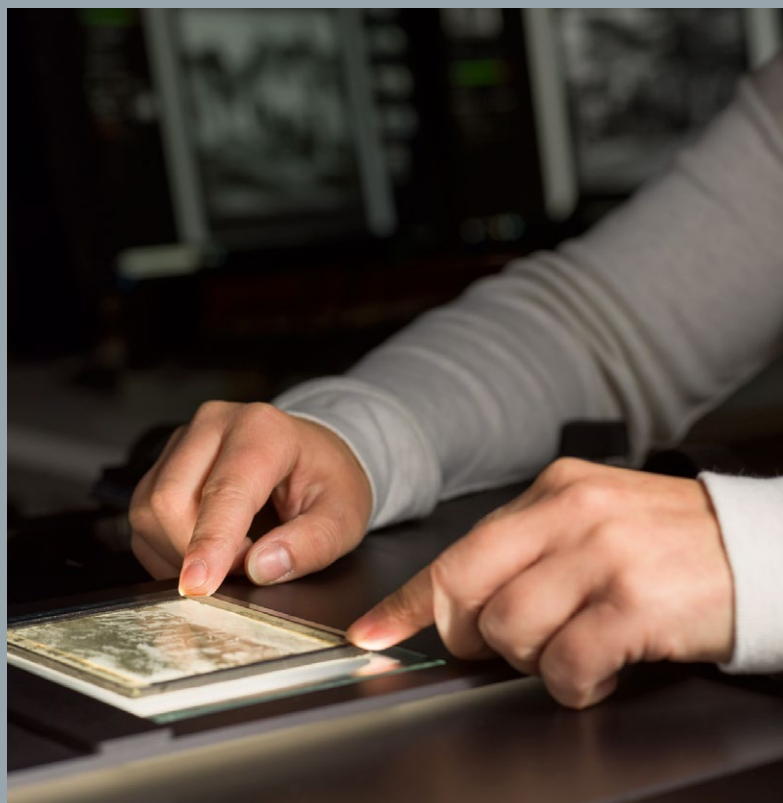
The Stasi Records Act (StUG) was adopted by the German Bundestag on 14 November 1991. It provides the legal basis for access to the Stasi records. Everyone has the right to request access to information that the records might contain about themselves. The right to privacy of third parties is hereby guarded unless it concerns individuals who were state security employees. Researchers, media as well as public and non-public bodies likewise have access to the records.



↑ ↑  
**Registration in the reading room  
in Koblenz**  
photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0220-033/  
Nobel, Jürgen

↑  
**When reading Stasi records, details  
identifying third parties or victims  
of the Stasi are redacted to protect  
their right to privacy. Exception: If  
a person previously gave consent  
their data will be left open.**  
source: BArch, MfS, ZAIG 3708, Bl. 6





↑  
 The sensitive archival material is preserved with a range of methods. Shown here: the digitisation of glass negatives  
 photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2020-1020-012/  
 Nobel, Jürgen

→  
 Poster for the elections of the National Assembly in 1918: women's suffrage was introduced in that year. "Your children need peace and bread; So, women: vote!"  
 source: BArch, Plak 002-004-017/  
 Grafik: Jaeger, Martha

## Preservation

The Federal Archives is also tasked with protecting the archive material against degradation and hazards in order to maintain their value for present and future generations. Preserving historical material is difficult as it is susceptible to external effects or internal disintegration. This is true for paper in the case of files, glass with old photographs, celluloid in film documents or magnetic tapes, as well as CDs and DVDs for digital materials. The large quantity of archive material to be stored also represents a challenge. Preserving original archive material also requires preventive measures on the basis of technical standards. A core inventory is therefore defined that is particularly important to German history and culture. Appropriate and sometimes elaborate steps are taken to delay material degradation and extend the lifespan of these sources.

The remaining archive material is also stored in the best possible conditions according to recognised standards. For instance, this includes flat storage in archive boxes in sealed repositories with a stable, cool indoor climate. Risk management, emergency planning and technologies are likewise continuously developed, thereby supporting active, long-term protection.



→  
 Professional storage of documents in the repository in Berlin-Lichterfelde  
 photo: BArch/Stange



## Restoration

Good storage should prevent any possible damage to the material to the greatest extent possible. Nevertheless, files or films need restoration in a number of cases. Sometimes, there are pre-existing damages that range from wear due to daily use as well as mould and pest infestation to the effects of war. The restoration methods are as diverse as the damages. The measures taken are very specialised and require a high degree of expertise. In the restoration workshops of the Federal Archives, the specialists work to remove mould, deacidify paper in special water baths or stabilise the original paper on a carrier layer.

## Reconstruction

During the Peaceful Revolution of 1989/90, the Ministry for State Security of the GDR sought to destroy many different documents. Courageous citizens brought this destruction to a halt by occupying Stasi buildings. It is thanks to them that many documents remain preserved. The Stasi tore up some of the documents by hand; their remains are stored in over 16,000 containers, typically sacks. A sack contains the shreds of between 2,500 and 3,500 torn pages.

Since 1995, around 1.7 million pages from Stasi records have been manually pieced together. This is equivalent to the content of more than 500 sacks. A further 91,000 pages were assembled during virtual reconstruction tests between 2013 and 2016.



↑↑

### Work in the restoration workshop

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0301-019/  
Nobel, Jürgen

↑

### Sorting and piecing together documents torn up by the Stasi.

photo: BStU/Dresen

## Digitisation

Digitising archival material has become a key aspect of the Federal Archives' work. Users are able to inspect an increasing number of digitised files, photos and other sources – from anywhere at any time. Sorted according to thematic criteria, historical documents are made available online.

The coronavirus pandemic accelerated digital transformation and the demand for a “digital reading room” grew even further. The Federal Archives continuously advances the digitisation and online presentation of documents. Every year, around 20 million pages and 4,000 film rolls are digitised – and the pace is quickening. For instance, the files of the Reich Chancellery and the Imperial Colonial Office have already been published digitally in their entirety. Sütterlin – old German handwriting – was made legible and, above all, searchable in selected documents of the Imperial Colonial Office with the use of artificial intelligence in a pilot project. In this way, this collection of files contributes even more effectively towards examining the unjust structures of the colonial system. Besides the digitisation of analogue archive material, the long-term preservation of “digital born” and hybrid records is becoming a task of ever-increasing importance. In order to preserve these digital sources for perpetuity, the Federal Archives has created the Digital Intermediate Archive in which archival electronic documents are stored and used.



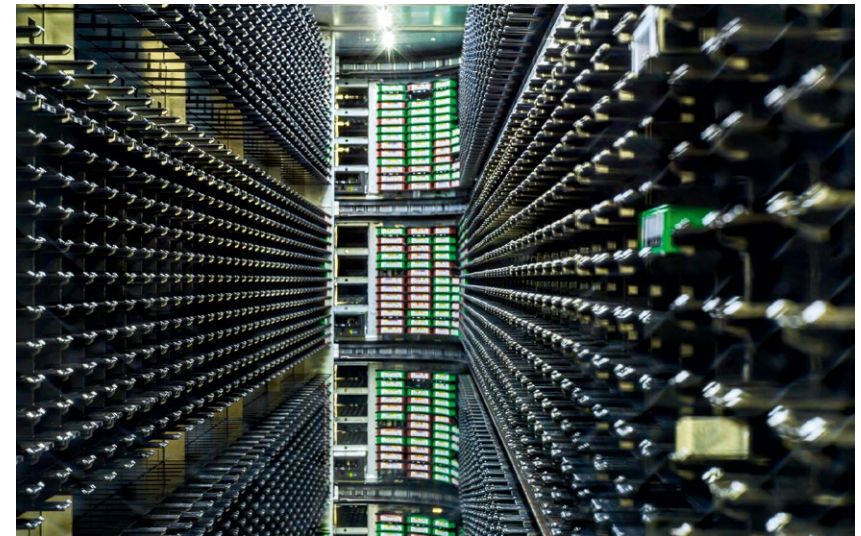
### Data storage in Koblenz

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2020-1019-002/  
Nobel, Jürgen



### Digitisation of files using a raised scanner

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2020-1014-001/Nobel, Jürgen





## Research

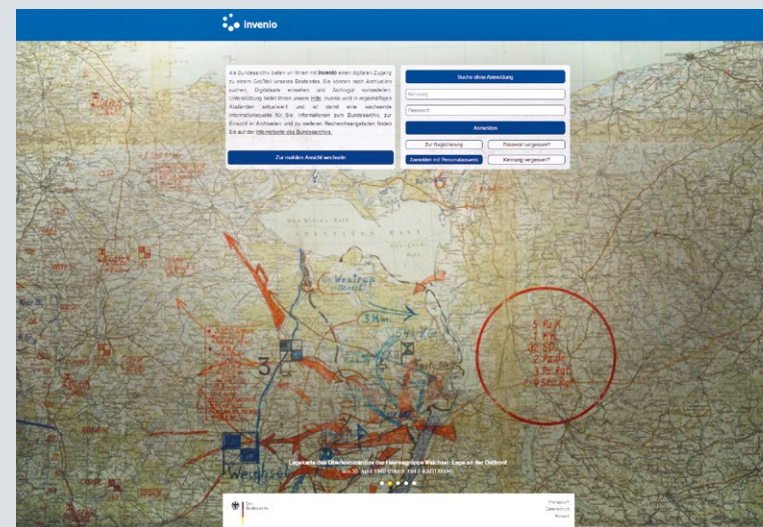
### Visiting the reading room

It is advisable to register in writing or by phone before visiting any of the locations of the Federal Archives. A request for use should be completed to prepare properly for a visit. Appointments can also be booked online. For viewing the Stasi records, an appointment is allocated only once the request for use has been processed.

*You can find the contact information for all locations of the Federal Archives on page 56 onwards.*



↑  
**Modern archival work is committed to service.**  
photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0220-032/  
Nobel, Jürgen



↑  
**invenio provides digital access to a large amount of the Federal Archives' collection.**  
photo: BArch

## Research applications

### invenio

The research application "invenio" allows you to search the files of the Federal Archives and order archival material for use in the reading room. Most of the digitised documents can be researched in invenio. The application is updated continuously. (In German only) [invenio.bundesarchiv.de](https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de)

**Contact:**  
*invenio service team*  
**Phone:** 0261 505-1177  
**Email:** [invenio@bundesarchiv.de](mailto:invenio@bundesarchiv.de)



## Image and film research

Around 270,000 images from the collections of the Federal Archives and another 165,000 photos from the Photo Department of the Press- and Information Office of the Federal Government (BPA) can be researched in the Digital Picture Archives. Most of the images are stored in Koblenz. Other collections are located in Berlin-Lichterfelde, in particular the image archive of the “Foundation Archives of the Political Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR” (SAPMO). Films from the collection of the Federal Archives can be found in the Film Library, for example. Those interested can search there and stream or download films from the period of the First World War, weekly newsreels and other federal productions.

The “online use media” (“Benutzungsmedien online”) search engine also offers the possibility to research and order more than 70,000 usable media from the Film Archive department online.

[bild.bundesarchiv.de/dba/en](http://bild.bundesarchiv.de/dba/en)  
[filmothek.bundesarchiv.de/?set\\_lang=en](http://filmothek.bundesarchiv.de/?set_lang=en)  
[bundesarchiv.de/benutzungsmedien](http://bundesarchiv.de/benutzungsmedien)

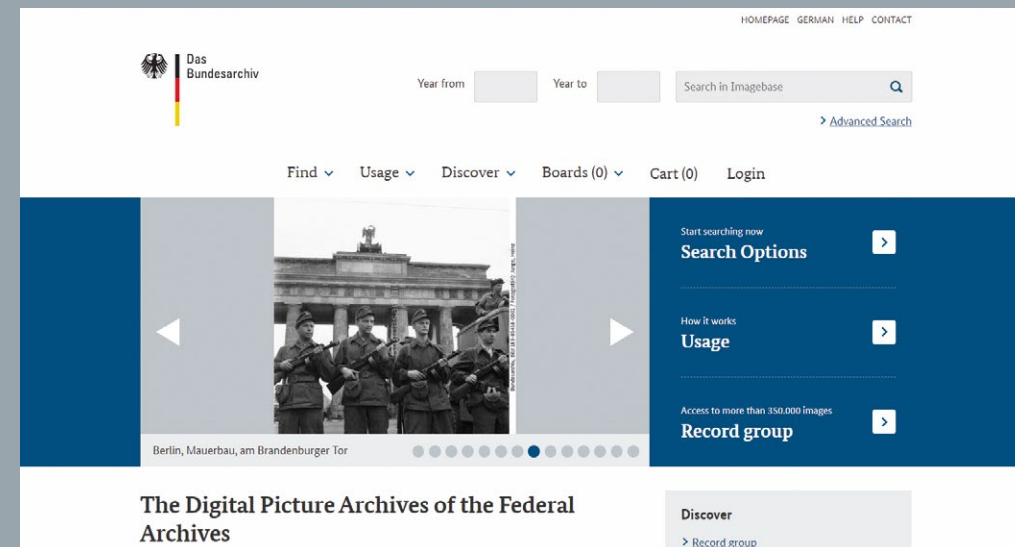
## Stasi records

Stasi records can be accessed by submitting a specific application form found on the web-site.

[stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/en/access-to-records/](http://stasi-unterlagen-archiv.de/en/access-to-records/)

In support of the research in the Stasi Records Archive interested parties can begin their search for example, in the online Stasi Media Centre ([stasi-mediathek.de](http://stasi-mediathek.de)) or the online finding aids available on “invenio”.

Contact:  
 Counselling Office of the Stasi Records Archive  
 Phone: 030 18665-7000



↑  
**How to find images depicting the construction of the Berlin Wall? Searching in the Digital Picture Archives makes this possible.**  
 photo: BArch

↓  
**Application to view the Stasi records**  
 photo: BArch/Stange



↓  
**The fates of people, such as Herbert Baum, can be researched in the “Memorial Book: Victims of the Persecution of Jews under the National Socialist Tyranny in Germany 1933–1945”.**  
[bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/en](http://bundesarchiv.de/gedenkbuch/en)  
 source: BArch, Bild 183-32713-0001



## Family research

Many people investigate the Federal Archives to conduct family research. This gives them highly personal contact with historical events, and they themselves become the narrators of history and stories.

The archive material of the Federal Archives contains a huge number of personal files, such as National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) member cards or personal records from imperial and federal authorities. The personal files can also be highly informative for research on family history with respect to the 20th century.

For civilians who lived in the former German East or Eastern European settlement regions prior to 1946, the Federal Archives stores card indexes and lists on former residential addresses and whereabouts following the war as well as experience reports in the Equalisation of Burdens Archive in Bayreuth.



In particular, the collections of the “Department Information on Personal Data related to World Wars I and II” are often of interest for investigating the fates of individuals. The Federal Archives provides information about members of the army, the Reichsmarine, the Kriegsmarine, the air force and the Wehrmacht. It also holds documents on the awarding of medals and badges of honour in the Wehrmacht and on the medical files of certain soldiers. Moreover, the Federal Archives ascertains evidence of the captivity of German soldiers as prisoners of war and helps to clarify the fates of missing persons.

Using information from the Central Prisoners' Index of the Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Archives is able to provide assistance in verifying periods of imprisonment in the GDR.

For the files in the Stasi Records Archive, there is also the possibility to submit a request. Close relatives of missing persons or deceased persons can investigate the fate of their own family with the help of Stasi records, provided they can prove a justified interest.

*More information on person-related and family research at the Federal Archives:*



←  
Filing cabinet of the “Department Information on Personal Data related to World Wars I and II” in Berlin-Tegel. Here, for example, records are stored about war graves from the period of the First World War, which can contribute to determining the fate of missing persons and those killed in action.

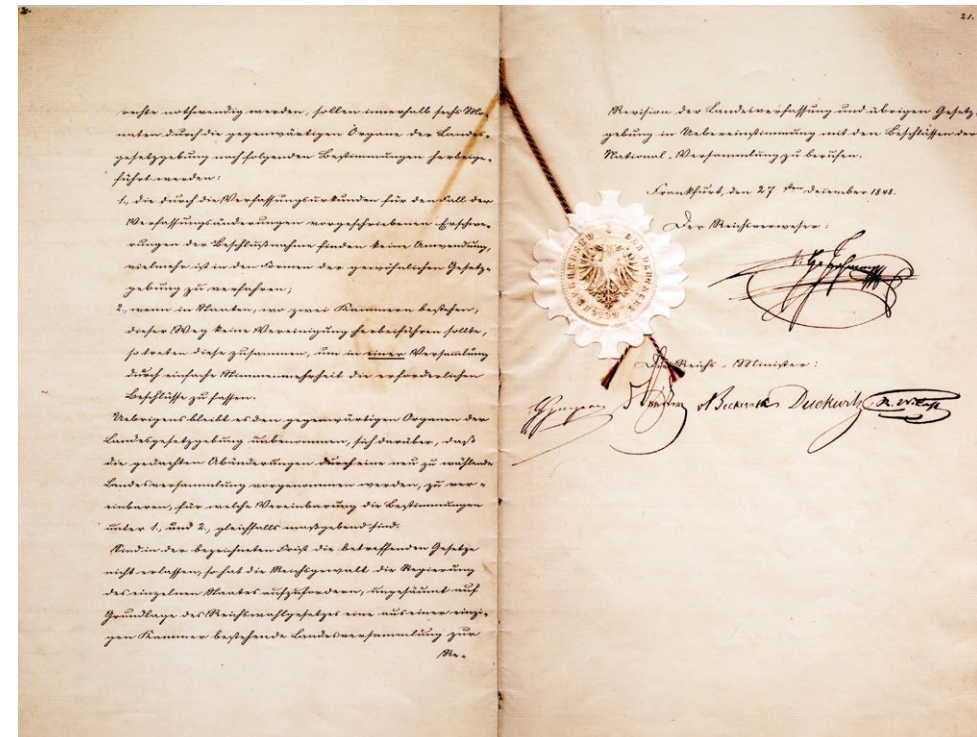
photo: BArch/Placek

## Archival material

### What can you find here?

Documents:	approx. <b>540</b> continuous kilometres including index cards
Images:	approx. <b>15</b> million
Films:	approx. <b>900,000</b> analogue film rolls and approx. <b>36,000</b> digital reproductions of approx. <b>337,000</b> films
Audio materials:	approx. <b>68,800</b>
Posters:	approx. <b>75,000</b>
Maps, plans and technical drawings:	approx. <b>2</b> million
Library:	approx. <b>2,7</b> million volumes
Digitised content:	approx. <b>20</b> million document pages and approx. <b>4,000</b> film roles per year

↓  
Act on the Introduction of the Basic  
Rights of the German People, Frankfurt  
am Main, 1848  
source: BArch, DB 1-U/96



## Written Documents

“The Basic Rights of the German People” of 1848, NSDAP member cards, Schindler’s List, the handling of the RAF terrorism in the autumn of 1977 by the Federal Government or the commands of Stasi minister Mielke – all this is history that becomes manifest on paper.

Most of the written archive material comes from the authorities of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the federal courts. Every year, the total amount of analogue documents held at the Federal Archives grows by around three to five kilometres. The authorities are also increasingly working with electronic files and specialist procedures, which are digitally accepted and secured at the Federal Archives.

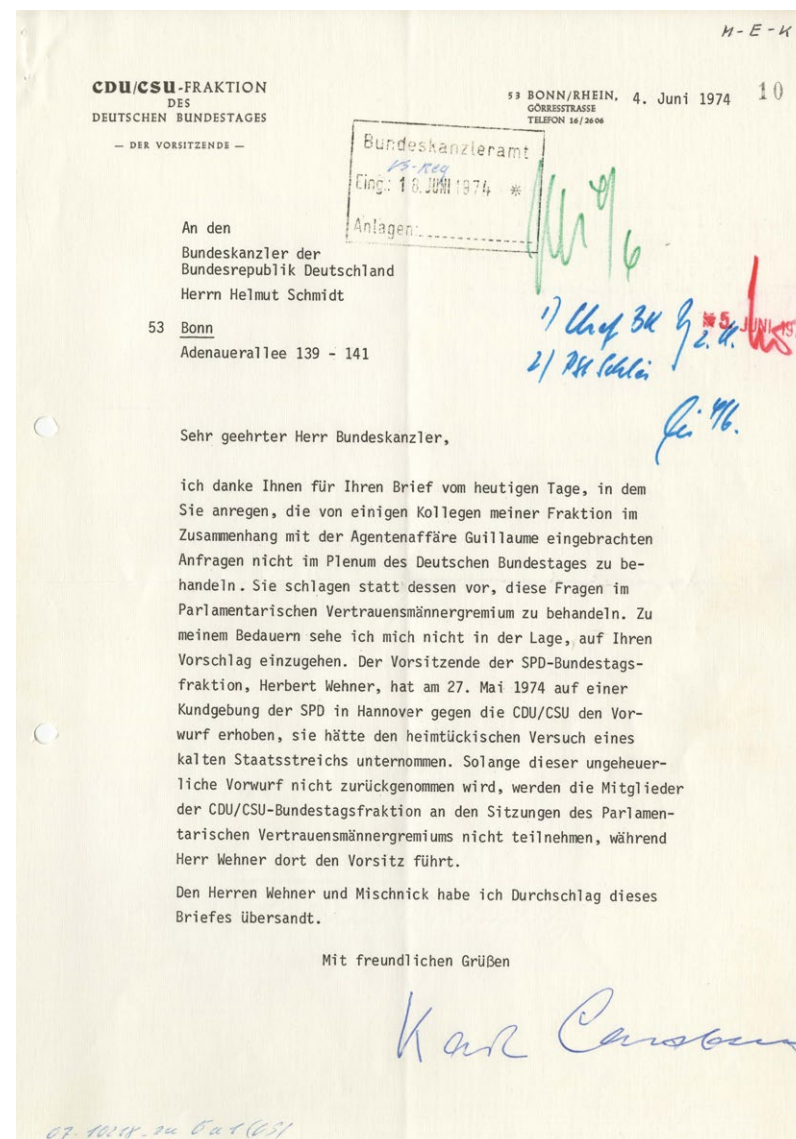


↓  
Repository with Stasi records  
in Berlin-Lichtenberg  
photo: BStU/Mulders



The legacies of people of contemporary history, documents of organisations and associations of national importance and modern collections supplement this material. The oldest records include the case files of the Imperial Chamber Court (1495-1806). The Federal Archives also contains files from the German Confederation, especially archival material from the central authorities since the foundation of the North German Confederation and the German Reich. In addition to the state documents, this also includes those of the NSDAP. Despite the relocation of important collections of the Reich Archives, considerable losses occurred during the Second World War. This is also true for the documents of the Reich authorities that had not yet been submitted to the archives.

↓  
Letter by Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union  
(CDU/CSU) Chairman Karl Carstens to Federal Chancellor  
Helmut Schmidt on the Guillaume espionage affair of 1974  
source: BAArch, B 136-52072



The archival material from central military authorities and all subordinate bodies and units from 1867 to the present day can be found in the Military Archive department of the Federal Archives in Freiburg. This is where documents from the armed forces of the North German Confederation as well as the Wehrmacht, Waffen-SS, the National People's Army (NPA) and the Bundeswehr are held.

The records produced in the main civil authorities of the GDR are likewise found in the Federal Archives. The affiliated "Foundation Archives of the Political Parties and Mass Organisations of the GDR" (SAPMO) is part of the Federal Archives and primarily handles the administration of the documents created by the central political parties in the GDR as well as by mass organisations such as the Free German Youth (FGY).

Documents of the Stasi Records Archive are divided into files already archived by the state security service and the material that was still being processed by the Ministry for State Security during the occupation of public offices in 1989-1990. The documents found in the offices of Stasi workers have been packed together and secured. There are also more than 41 million index cards in more than 5,700 file systems, which to this day continue to enable investigations of the complex records of the Ministry for State Security as finding aids. This includes the central personal index "F 16" or the central process index "F 22" of the Stasi.

Handwritten form with fields for name, date, and other details. The form is titled "Erfassungsmarte" and contains handwritten entries in blue ink.

← Front side of the index card for Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg in the central personal index for the former Wehrmacht information office (WAST)

source: BArch, B 563-1 Kartei S-3808/303

KL Groß-Rosen - AL Brühlitz/Häftl. Liste (Männer) - 18.4.45 Blatt 5

Lfd. Nr.	H. Art u. Mat.	H. Nr.	Name und Vorname	Geburtsdatum	Beruf
241	Ju. Fo.	69077	Allerhand Salo	15. 6. 28	Tischlergeh.
242	"	8	Beckmann Samuel	12. 7. 21	Kutscher
243	"	1	Hilfstein Edward	17. 3. 24	Wasserinst. Ges.
244	"	2	Hilfstein David	8. 2. 09	Wasserinst. Ges.
245	"	3	Danziger Eduard	16. 11. 11	Konstruktionszeichn.
246	"	4	Beer Alter	18. 6. 20	ang. Metallverarb.
247	"	5	Bau Josef	2. 5. 18	Zeichner/Graphiker
248	"	6	Bottner Mojse	1. 7. 05	Tischlermeister
249	"	7	Freimann Siegfried	30. 12. 06	Schneiderges.
250	"	8	Glücksman Salomon	4. 4. 03	Maschinenbautechn.
251	"	9	Balsam Salomon	21. 3. 06	Maurer
252	"	1	Binder Alter	17. 10. 07	Lackiermeister
253	"	2	Baum Julius	8. 7. 11	Kalerges.
254	"	3	Bratkiewicz Watan	31. 3. 09	Schuhmachermeister
255	"	4	Ausibel David	25. 6. 86	Stanzler
256	"	5	Beck Friedrich	3. 4. 21	ang. Metallverarb.
257	"	6	Buchsbaum Jakob	15. 6. 14	Tischlergeh.
	"	7	Beck Fischer	23. 7. 26	ang. Metallverarb.
	"	8	Beder Jerzy	4. 5. 97	Klempnergeh.
	"	9	Brunner Chaim	1. 6. 06	ang. Metallverarb.
	"	10	Grubner Chaim	1. 3. 10	Schneiderges.
	"	11	Dlecheisen Mendel	21. 5. 09	Schneidertischler
	"	12	Dlecheisen Chaim	10. 6. 04	ang. Metallverarb.
	"	13	St. Majer	9. 6. 25	Schreibkraft
	"	14		25. 12. 99	Schneiderges.
	"	15		5. 17	Tischler
	"	16			Metallverarb.



↑ The list was among the documents found in Oskar Schindler's case. After the documents were accepted and secured, the Federal Archives handed over the material to Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, as this is where Schindler's estate is found. The Federal Archives received a copy of the list as a token of gratitude.  
photo: BArch/Hambuch



← Documents in Sütterlin handwriting are indexed.  
photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0301-009/ Nobel, Jürgen

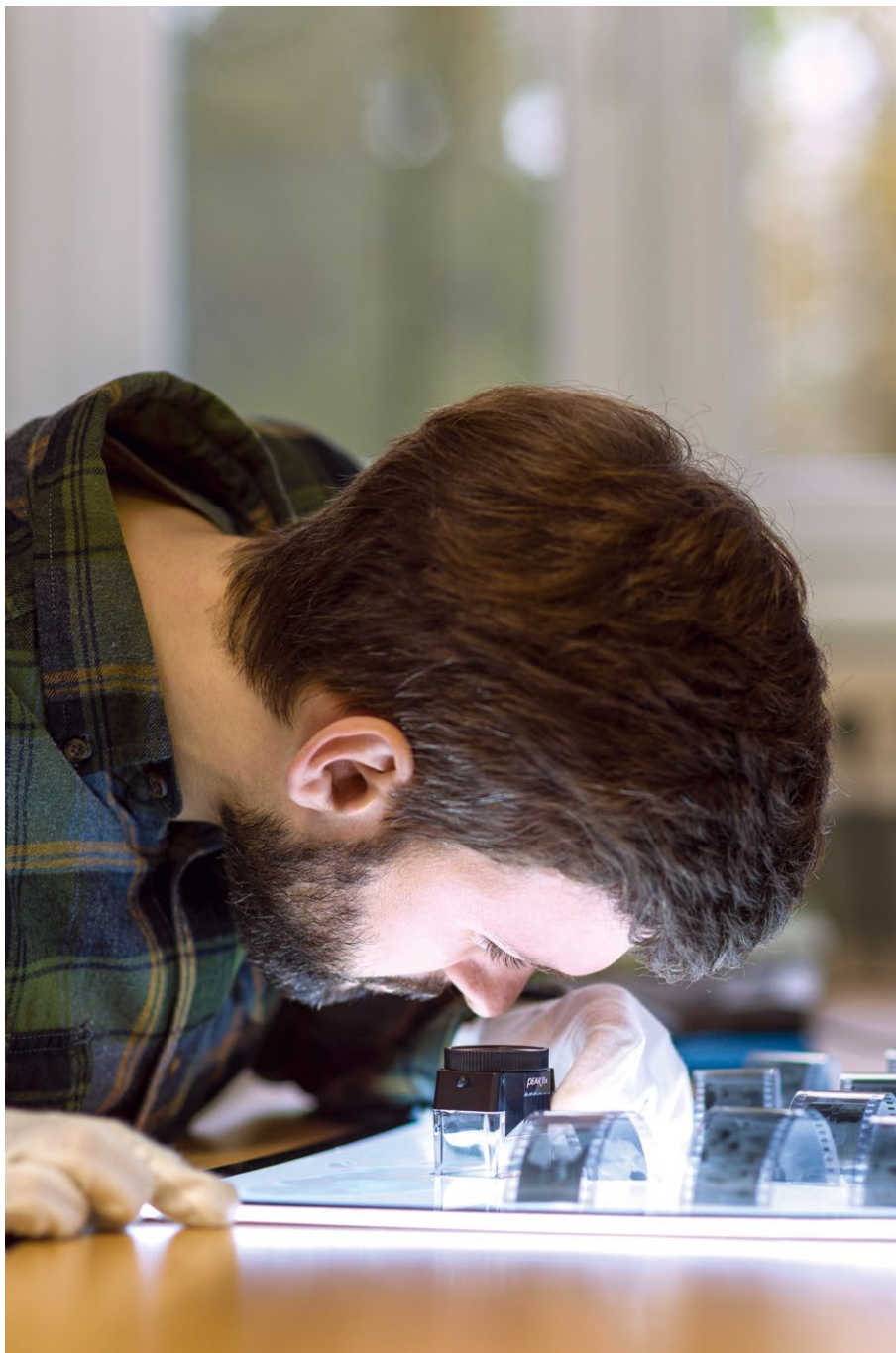
← Index cards of the Ministry for State Security of the GDR  
photo: BStU/Mulders





### Inspection of photograph negatives

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2020-1014-003/  
Nobel, Jürgen



## Images

More than 15 million photographs, aerial pictures and posters in the Federal Archives document the history of German society – its most important political, economic, social and cultural events. While the collection of images of the Federal Archives begins with early pictures from the 17th century, the first photographs date back to 1860.

The pictorial materials primarily document events and people of the 20th century: the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR. The poster collection is also of particular importance, providing information on political parties and associations, elections, state propaganda and the public relations work of official bodies. Public announcement posters for official positions also exist dating back to 1870.



A crowd of customers stands in front of a store following the issuance of the Deutschmark. The currency reform entered into force in the western sectors on 21 June 1948. Advertising sign: "New currency... new prices!"

source: BArch, B 145 Bild-P029088/Puck-Archiv



A wide range of image materials have been passed down. These include the collections of propaganda company of the Second World War and the General German News Service (ADN/Zentralbild) of the GDR. The photographs of the Press and Information Office of the Federal Government offer a reflection of political life.

Around 2 million photographs provide visual testimony of the Stasi. In many cases, these materials are the only photographic documents of places that were otherwise forbidden from being photographed in the GDR. Numerous actions by the opposition are likewise often only documented in this manner.



↑  
In 1982, scenes of the James Bond film "Octopussy" were filmed in Berlin on the western side of Checkpoint Charlie. Documenting filming work close to the border was a routine task for the Stasi. This is also how the surveillance photograph of actor Robert Brown came into being. (extract)

photo: BArch, MfS, HAVI, Nr. 182, Bl. 102

←  
The 1972 Olympic Games in Munich, where the terrorist attack occurred against the Israeli team. Shown here: Shmuel Lalkin, Head of the Israel Olympic Delegation, speaks during the memorial service.

source: Bundesregierung, B 145 Bild-00080493/Wegemann, Ludwig

↓  
"Violent anarchists". Wanted poster for RAF members in 1970–1972 (extract)

source: BArch, Plak 006-001-058







↑  
**Film reconstruction: opening an area of old adhesive residue**  
 photo: BArch/Luck

→  
**Film rolls at the repository in Koblenz**  
 photo: BArch, B-198 Bild-2017-0202-007/  
 Nobel, Jürgen

## Films

The Federal Archives stands for more than 120 years of German film history. Over 337,000 works on different analogue media and in digital form make up the audio-visual collection of the Federal Archives. These include films of all genres, such as documentaries, weekly newsreels, feature films, experimental films, cartoon and children's films as well as informative and educational films and historically valuable amateur footage.

The film collection largely comprises materials from the Reich Film Archive, the State Film Archive of the GDR and the Film Archive department of the Federal Archives prior to 1990. Moreover, films from cinema subsidy programmes are among the newer records in the Federal Archives.



Das Bundesarchiv

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## UFA-Wochenschau 241/1961

07.03.1961

[Key Frames](#)
[Content](#)
[Filmography](#)
[List of Sequences](#)

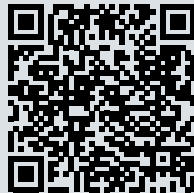
Das Bundesarchiv

01:05.04

bulbs, man in a turbine, shipyard, VW car park in Wolfsburg. (All archive) 2 scenes press conference. (10:00:15 10:00:58) 02. **Kennedy** press conference due to Adenauer's visit the White House, **Kennedy** receives several visitors, cameramen, **Kennedy** goes on a press conference and announced the Adenauer's invitation to Washington. (Original sound without translation) (10:00:58 10:01:30) 03 US-Ambassador Harriman at Adenauer sentry, Adenauer occurs with Harriman and from Brentano on the terrace of the Palais Schaumburg, cameramen, both smiling big and by Brentano, finally shake hands. (10:01:30 10:01:45) 04. **Kennedy**'s Adviser Henry Kissinger Rhine Hotel Dreesen, Bad Godesberg, outside, long shot inside with Willy Brandt as a listener, Kissinger at the lectern, among the listeners of Willy Brandt and Fritz Erler. Recorded interview Kissinger: "the main problem of the West is not a technical, but a moral issue. The West must be about the goals clear, he wants to keep track of and about the world in which he can live. The military strategic position of the United States cannot be separated from the West. There is not a US strategy and a European strategy, there is only a Western strategy." (10:01:45 10:02:30) 05. 43. anniversary of the Red Army of Kremlin: large room total and front page with many flags and a bust of Lenin, talking div. MP, including Defense Minister Malinowski (all mute). (10:02:30 10:02:48) 06 Breshnev in Guinea Breshnev with

↑  
Discover the collection of films at  
[filmothek.bundesarchiv.de/?set\\_lang=en](http://filmothek.bundesarchiv.de/?set_lang=en)  
photo: BArch

→ Here, you can watch the UFA weekly newsreel from 7 March 1961. From 00:01:20, a press conference is shown with US President Kennedy, who invites German Chancellor Adenauer to Washington.



The Film Archive indexes and preserves state-funded German productions, provided these were not created for television. The oldest publicly presented motion pictures from 1895 are likewise stored in the archives, as are numerous classics from the period of silent film or productions by the current winners of the German Film Prize. Productions commissioned by federal authorities and films supported by funds of the Federal Republic of Germany are also held on the basis of the Federal Archives Act. In this way, the Federal Archives work to safeguard national film heritage.

Modern digital media are used for indexing and provision. Each film is documented with its title. Extensive information is available for many films, including the year of production, tagging of locations, people and terms as well as content descriptions. This comprehensive collection is rounded off with photographs, posters and scripts.

German censorship cards between 1908 and 1945 are often the only evidence of lost films.

The core of the films collected in the Stasi Records Archive comes from the Ministry for State Security's own film studio, which was supported by the film laboratories of DEFA and television. The collection of 16-mm productions is supplemented by 35-mm and 8-mm films, many of which were created by external production studios or as amateur films. The aims of the Ministry for State Security's film production were public relations work, cultivation of tradition, "political operative work" as well as qualification and training.





## Audio materials

The Federal Archives holds more than 68,800 audio recordings. This wide range includes campaign speeches for the Reichstag elections of 1928, debates in the German Bundestag as well as sound recordings from the months of upheaval between the fall of the Berlin Wall and reunification in 1989-1990. The audio collections contain recordings produced at central German authorities or associations, or those given to the Federal Archives in the bequests of people of national significance.

SAPMO's collection of audio documents encompasses around 8,800 audio documents. These account for the organisational and political work of parties, mass organisations and associations of the GDR and reflect this aspect in the history of the German workers' movement. They also include recollections or private recordings.

The Stasi used a great variety of analogue technology to store audio. The audio records of the Stasi Records Archive thus comprise tapes, cassettes, records and dictation discs as well as wire recordings, across all tracking positions and speeds, from the 1950s to 1990. Almost every audio system that was used nationally and internationally was utilised by the Ministry for State Security.

Audio records are often particularly susceptible to deterioration. All sound carriers are therefore digitised in order to back up the original recordings. The sound carriers of SAPMO have already been fully digitised.

←  
The audio recorded on the various sound carriers is examined in the archive and secured in newer digital formats.  
photo: BArch/Witzel

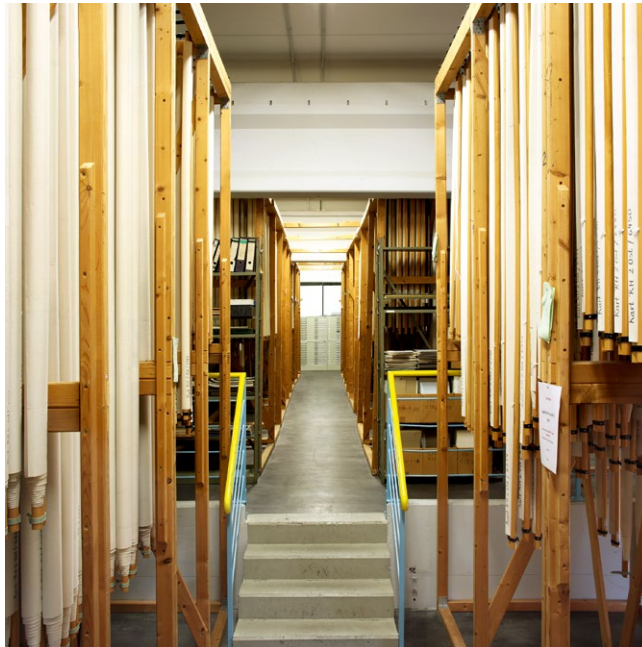
↓  
Audio workshop of the Stasi Records Archive  
photo: BArch/Appl





### Storage of large-format maps at the repository of the military archive in Freiburg

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0216-007/  
Hacke, Mila



## Maps

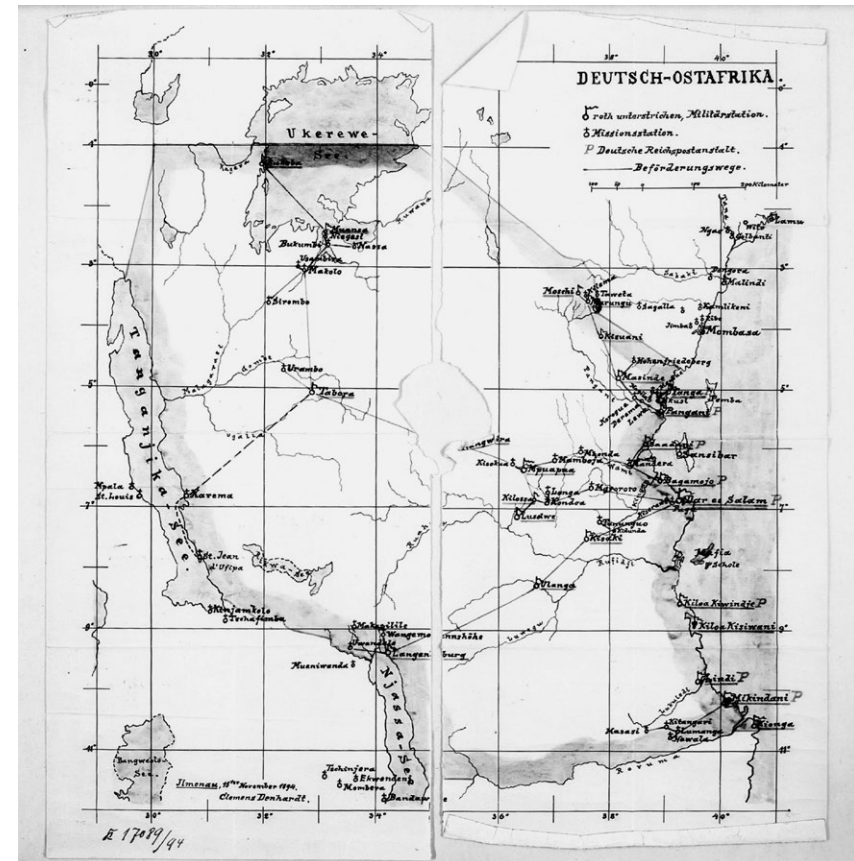
Almost 2 million maps, plans and technical drawings are held at the Federal Archives. The collections encompass maps of military history, such as the German army map or military position maps from the Second World War, as well as topographical maps, plans, site maps and technical drawings from the German Reich and the GDR.

Due to their size, the maps are typically stored at different locations depending on the topic and available repositories. For example, topographical maps of the German Reich and the GDR are stored in Berlin-Lichterfelde. City plans as well as administrative, railway, postal, sea, road, watercourse and economic maps from the mid-18th century can also be found here, in addition to construction plans of the GDR Construction Academy and maps of the German colonial administration.



### Germany's colonial past, with its implications that can still be felt to this day, is documented in the cartographic collection of the Federal Archives.

source: BArch, R 1001/931 K 1



Maps with military relevance are archived in Freiburg. Besides plans and drawings from the early 19th century, these include location maps, construction plans as well as a cartographical collection with topographical maps and special maps of military origin.

The Stasi Records Archive also accommodates maps, such as reconstructions of escape incidents and escape attempts, mounted maps for state visits as well as protocol route maps for members of the GDR state and party leadership.



## Offers

The Federal Archives presents its varied work and sources in exhibitions, publications, archive tours, presentations as well as films and special events. Different public offers provide an insight into the archival work as well as the chance to explore authentic accounts of German history. For students and teachers, the Federal Archives also offers special extracurricular programmes at a range of locations throughout Germany. These are supplemented by various source-based education materials, which make the historical documents of the Federal Archives tangible and understandable.



## A living archive

### “History in Stories” exhibition

The exhibition in the entrance area of the user centre in Berlin-Lichterfelde revolves around the history of the Federal Archives and the archive collections themselves. The paths and circumstances through which archive material reaches the Federal Archives or has become lost are closely tied to the course of German history. Irreplaceable losses due to the two World Wars and impressive accounts of two dictatorships are among these collections, underlining the important tasks of the Federal Archives.



A wide range of educational offers provide an insight into the archival work and our collections.

photo: BArch/Stange

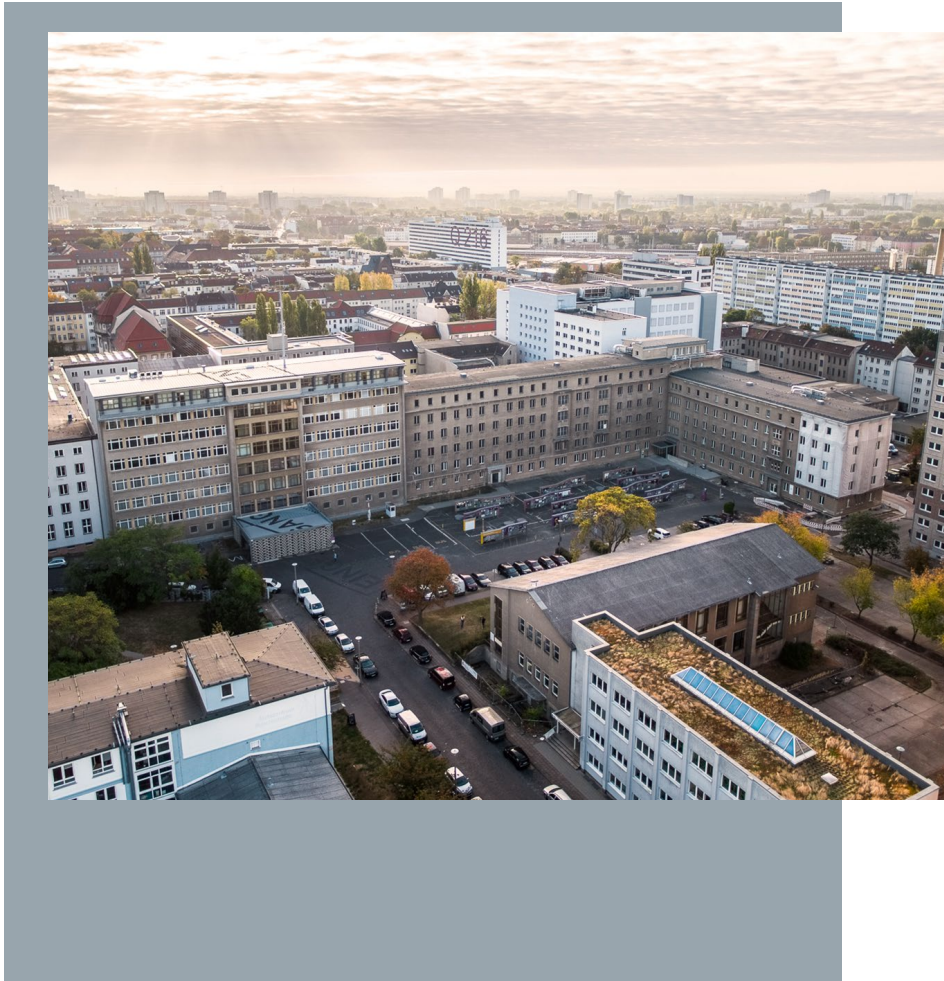


Exhibition in Berlin-Lichterfelde: exhibits from various periods present German history and offer insights into archival work. Tours in English are possible on request.

photo: BArch/Kobow-Kroel







↑  
**Stasi headquarters: Campus for Democracy in Berlin-Lichtenberg**  
 photo: BStU/Dronebrothers



←  
**The “Access to secrecy” exhibition shows how the Stasi operated and the severe consequences this could have for the people affected.**  
 photo: BStU/Dresen

### Stasi headquarters: Campus for Democracy

For 40 years, the compound in Lichtenberg housed the headquarters of the Ministry for State Security. The Stasi headquarters also became a setting of the Peaceful Revolution, when courageous citizens forced their way onto the premises to make a stand against the secret police. Since then, the place has been used to educate people about the dictatorship of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. The Stasi Records Archive and institutions of historical appraisal offer exhibitions, tours, educational material and events here on the Campus for Democracy.

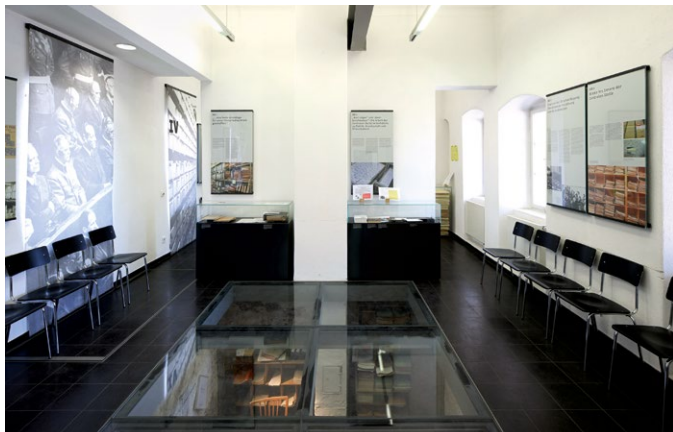
### “Access to Secrecy” exhibition

How did the Stasi store, analyse and use information about individuals? At the historical location in Berlin-Lichtenberg, “Access to Secrecy” makes the Stasi Records Archive tangible with “walk-in files”, interactive media stations and original exhibits. Tours of the exhibition and archive are possible. The education team of the Stasi Records Archive provides a wide range of offers to teachers and students at this historical site.



### Exhibition in Ludwigsburg on National Socialist crimes

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0214-002/  
Hacke, Mila



### Educational offer at the memorial in Rastatt

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0221-011/  
Nobel, Jürgen



### Memorial site of freedom movements in German history

The baroque Schloss Rastatt played a key role in the final phase of the revolution of 1848/1849. On 9 May 1849, the uprising of Baden soldiers began in the prestigious courtyard of the castle, demanding democracy and fundamental rights. The Memorial for the Freedom Movements of German History has been commemorating this event since 1974. With its permanent exhibition, this place is also an attraction for school classes.

### “The Investigators of Ludwigsburg” exhibition

Next to the service and archive building stands “Schorndorfer Torhaus”, constructed in 1760 as a station and customs house. Here, the exhibition showcases photographs, records and case documentation to address National Socialist crimes and their legal treatment. The Central Offices of State Justice Administrations for the Investigation of National Socialist Crimes established in 1958 in Ludwigsburg are fundamental to this exhibition. Special educational offers are available for school classes and teachers.

### Guided Tours

A glimpse into the archive during tours is also possible in English at some of our locations following registration.

*The contact details can be found on page 56 onwards and on our website.*



### Visitors learn about archival work and collections in Koblenz.

Foto: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0220-029/Nobel, Jürgen



## A glimpse into the archive – online

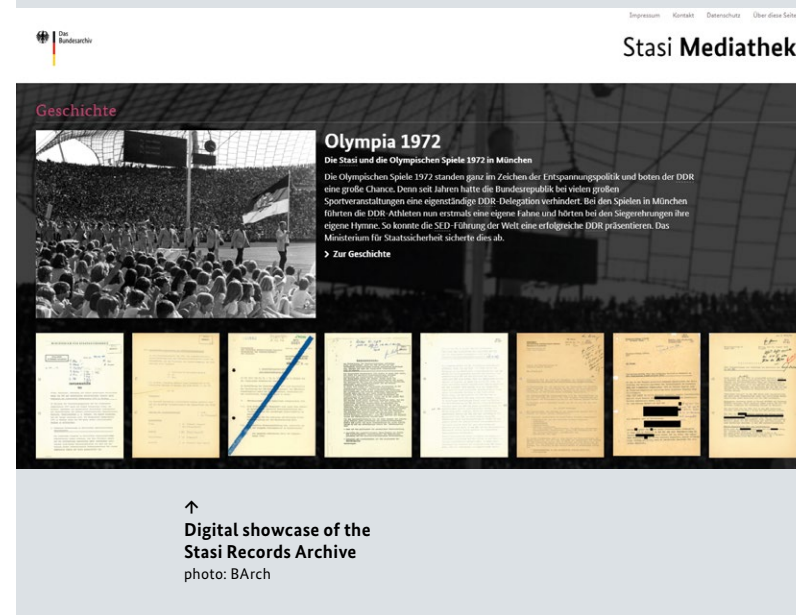
Learn more about the colonial war against the Herero people, the attempt at Adolf Hitler's life and its consequences, infection control during the Cold War, boxing legend Max Schmeling or the construction of the Berlin Wall. Annotated online-galleries with photographs, posters and documents provide an insight into the varied collections of the Federal Archives.

Discover the article on the British double agent Kim Philby here:



↓  
**Philby was a guest of the Ministry for State Security in Berlin in 1981. He spoke before an assembly of high-ranking officers about his activities as a KGB spy within the British foreign intelligence agency MI6.**

photo: BArch, MfS, HV A, Vi, Nr. 30



### Stasi Media Centre

The Stasi Media Centre offers multimedia access to selected contents of Stasi records. Thousands of documents made available online show the modus operandi of the GDR secret police. Besides document material, this online service provides access to videos, audio recordings and photographs of the Stasi.

[stasi-mediathek.de](http://stasi-mediathek.de)

### Thematic portals

The Federal Archives presents digital contents on a range of portals, some of which spanning multiple archives. These offer a quick and clear entry point to central topics. These include the following examples:

#### First World War

In this portal, the Federal Archives presents more than 700,000 digitised pages from the files of the First World War. These are supplemented by photographs and audio materials on many individual topics and further offers for research and education related to the First World War. Valuable information for family research can also be found here.

[ersterweltkrieg.bundesarchiv.de](http://ersterweltkrieg.bundesarchiv.de)





### **Weimar Republic**

Listen to historical sources from the Weimar period – such as the speech of Friedrich Ebert to the National Assembly on his swearing-in as president of the Reich on 21 August 1919 – or study maps on the course of borders following the Treaty of Versailles. The portal also contains interactive and didactive offers.  
[weimar.bundesarchiv.de](http://weimar.bundesarchiv.de)

### **GDR in focus**

The secret reports composed over 37 years by the “Central Analysis and Information Group” (ZAIG in German) of the Ministry for State Security for the information of the GDR party and state leadership since the June uprising of 1953 are an especially valuable source of contemporary history. The database provides access to all documents for a given year.  
[ddr-im-blick.de](http://ddr-im-blick.de)



↑  
**Discover sources on German reunification online**

source: BArch, Bild 183-1990-1003-400/  
 Grimm, Peter

### **Reunification**

In no other era of German history were so many political decisions of historic importance taken and discussed in so brief a period as 1989/1990. The portal presents images, original sounds, files and films, as well as selected figures whose legacies are stored in the Federal Archives. Virtual exhibitions are dedicated to individual aspects of the unification process.  
[wiedervereinigung.bundesarchiv.de](http://wiedervereinigung.bundesarchiv.de)

### **Compensation**

This thematic portal launched as part of “Archivportal-D” was initiated by the Federal Ministry of Finance as a follow-up task to the compensations of National Socialist injustice. It initially combines information on the pertinent file collections of the Federation, federal states and, in future, other bodies. This platform facilitates research and can be used for political education.  
<https://www.archivportal-d.de/themenportale/wiedergutmachung?lang=en>

## Libraries

Spread across different locations, the Federal Archives provides more than 2 million publications in total. Each library holds collections according to different topics of literature. These include sources and research literature on German history. Official documents from higher-level state authorities, relevant German and English-language scientific literature as well as works published by users constitute special areas of focus. Thematic literature is supplemented by general referential works and archival literature. Most of the literature collection can be searched in the online catalogue of the Federal Archives' libraries. Some older publications can be found on site using card catalogues. The literature can be used in the reading rooms and also borrowed in some cases.



**Libraries at the Federal Archives:  
a user while querying index cards**

photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2017-0301-005/  
Nobel, Jürgen



**The periodical “Forum” is released annually,  
covering a current archival topic of political,  
legal or historical relevance.**

photo: BArch/Stange

## Publications

Publications on various topics of German history in the 19th and 20th century have been admitted to the range of “Schriften” (“writings”) of the Federal Archives since 1955. This range currently comprises 80 volumes: monographies, biographies and editions.

Contemporary editions are an essential contribution of the archives to fundamental historical research. At its own responsibility, the Federal Archives publishes series for example “Die Kabinettsprotokolle der Bundesregierung” (“The Cabinet Minutes of the Federal Government”) and editions such as “Akten der Reichskanzlei” (“Records of the Reich Chancellery”). Some editions are also presented online. The digital offering is continuously expanded.

The Stasi Records Archive conducts its own research on the structure, methods and effects of the Ministry for State Security. It releases publication series and individual publications on research findings, fundamental research on GDR state security, the appraisal of the Socialist Unity Party dictatorship as well as historical political education and technical archive topics. More than 150 such publications are currently available to download free of charge. The offer is constantly expanded with new editions and digitisations.

*All current publications can be found on our website.*



↓  
**Headquarters of the Federal Archives  
in Koblenz**  
photo: BArch, B 198 Bild-2016-0922-001/  
Weber, Günter





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