



## Finding Ancestors in Alsace-Lorraine

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The historical region of Alsace-Lorraine is now covered by seven French departments: Bas-Rhin, Haut-Rhin, Moselle, Meurthe- et- Moselle, Meuse, Vosges, and the Territoire de Belfort. All of the respective departmental archives offer records online. Additional resources are available on other websites. This class presents an overview of these sources.

### Finding a town of origin

- <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=49142> German Emigrants from the Department of Haut-Rhin, France, part 1 (1837-1844) and 2 ( 1845 to 1847)
- <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=1705> Alsace-Lorraine, Germany, French Citizenship declarations (optants), 1872.
- Search <http://www.geneanet.org/> for the ancestor or the surname, if it is less common.

### Research by departments

Administratively, France is divided into numbered departments. Each department has its own archive. Most departments have put records of interest to family historians online. An easy way to locate the respective “online archive” is

- Go to <https://www.google.fr/> (searches French language websites first)
- Search for “archives en ligne”
- One of the top results is the French archive website <https://francearchives.fr/article/38135> . Click on the department map of France
- Every department marked in blue on the resulting map has some records online. Click on the desired department to get to the website.
- Each website is arranged in a unique way. It may take some experimenting to find out what is there and how to access the information.
- Most websites require the user to accept the conditions of use by clicking on a specific box. This must be done before records can be accessed.
- For detailed instructions on how to use online departmental archives, see [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Using\\_France\\_Online\\_Department\\_Archives](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Using_France_Online_Department_Archives)

### Bas-Rhin (Niederrhein) - 67

The Adeloche Collection includes parish registers and civil registration records in the department of Bas-Rhin: <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/registres-paroissiaux-et-documents-d-etat-civil/> Enter the name of the “commune” (“civil community”) into the white search field and click on “rechercher” (search). This will bring up a virtual bookshelf with books labelled “BMS” (baptisms, marriages, burials), TD (tables decennales – 10-year tables/ indexes), N (Naissances- births), M (marriages) D (décès- deaths), PM (publication of marriages). After clicking on the desired book the user is asked to accept the conditions of use before the images can be accessed. If a precise town of origin is not known, it is possible to search the 10-year tables one community at

a time.

Another helpful online resource is the Ellenbach collection <http://archives.bas-rhin.fr/recensements-population/> of 19<sup>th</sup> Century census records and population registers. They are available for 1819, 1836, 1841, 1846, 1851, 1856, 1861, 1866, 1880 and 1885. The 1819 population register includes the names and marital status of all adult men and women, and the number of children (no names). The formats and information provided in the 5-year censuses vary by year; see [https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/France\\_Census](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/France_Census) .

## **Haut-Rhin (Oberrhein) – 68**

In Haut-Rhin, only the civil registration records from 1793 to 1892 and the 1808 Jewish surname lists are available online at <http://www.archives.haut-rhin.fr/search?preset=44&view=list> . Detailed inventories of the church and civil registration records can be downloaded from links found on the same page.

## **Moselle - 57**

The digital archive for Moselle is found at <http://www.archives57.com/index.php/recherches/archives-en-ligne> . It includes images of the parish registers and ten-year civil registration tables/ indexes. Also online are cadastral maps from the time period 1808-1845, and military muster rolls for the classes of 1893 to 1921. The “class” is the year when a potential recruit is twenty years old. However, currently (26 April 2017) online searches in that system don’t seem to work. Every search comes back with “no reply”.

Microfilm copies of the civil registration and church records can be ordered to local family history centers and searched there.

## **Metz and suburbs**

The municipal archive of Metz has published color scans of various record collections online at [https://archives.metz.fr/4DCGI/Web\\_RegistresLance/ILUMP31177](https://archives.metz.fr/4DCGI/Web_RegistresLance/ILUMP31177) :

- Civil registration records and 10-year tables
- Catholic and Protestant parish registers
- Population registers from 1793 to 1866

## **Meurthe-et-Moselle – 54**

Meurthe-et-Moselle was created after the Franco-Prussian War in 1871 from parts of the historic departments of Meurthe and Moselle. The current boundary between Meurthe-et-Moselle and Moselle was the border between France and Germany from 1871 to 1919 and 1940 to 1944. For a detailed list of localities that were moved from Meurthe to Meurthe-et-Moselle see [http://archives.cg54.fr/fileadmin/Sites/Archives\\_d\\_partementales\\_de\\_Meurthe\\_et\\_Moselle/documents/Archives\\_en\\_ligne/Table\\_Alpha\\_Communes\\_Compact.pdf](http://archives.cg54.fr/fileadmin/Sites/Archives_d_partementales_de_Meurthe_et_Moselle/documents/Archives_en_ligne/Table_Alpha_Communes_Compact.pdf) . A detailed place list for Meurthe-et-Moselle with cross-references is found at

[http://archives.cg54.fr/fileadmin/Sites/Archives\\_d\\_partementales\\_de\\_Meurthe\\_et\\_Moselle/documents/Archives\\_en\\_ligne/54\\_communes\\_liste.pdf](http://archives.cg54.fr/fileadmin/Sites/Archives_d_partementales_de_Meurthe_et_Moselle/documents/Archives_en_ligne/54_communes_liste.pdf) .

The online archive of the department Meurthe-et-Moselle found at <http://www.archives.meurthe-et-moselle.fr/fr/archives-en-ligne.html> includes images of

- Civil registration records and parish registers. The user needs to type in the name of the commune, so the list from the FamilySearch Catalog may help, since the same records have also been filmed. Enter “Meurthe-et-Moselle” in the Catalog and click on “Places within France, Meurthe-et-Moselle” above the search results. For a complete list of records available for a given locality enter the place name and immediately click on “rechercher” (search). Click on the “eye” next to the description to access the images.
- 19<sup>th</sup> Century population registers and census records for 1872 to 1936. Census years include 1872, 1876, 1881, 1886, 1891, 1896, 1901, 1906, 1911, 1921, 1926, 1931 and 1936.

This section also includes various research helps, including a historic map of the department and the city of Nancy, and street indexes for Nancy.

- Military recruitment lists for the classes of 1887 to 1921.

## **Meuse - 55**

The digital archive found at <http://archives.meuse.fr/search/home> includes

- *Matricules militaires* – military conscription lists 1867-1932, with indexes. Entries include birth information, parents, personal description, service details
- *Cadaastre* – land plat maps, arranged by locality
- *Récensement* – censuses and population registers. Click on “Affinez votre recherche” to enter the locality. Available records range from around 1800 to 1931.
- *Etat civil* – civil registration records. Parish registers are included in this category. In the search box, choose the locality, record type, and time period(s), or click on “affinez votre recherche” to specify additional details.
- Several collections of historical photographs, books, and documents
- “*Monographies communales*” - Handwritten descriptions and histories of 97 communities

## **Vosges – 88**

The archive website is located at <http://www.archives-recherche.vosges.fr/> Click on “Recherche en ligne” on the top, then on “Base de données et images numérisées”.

That brings up the “*archives en ligne*” with the available collections. The online archive includes civil registration (including parish registers), censuses and population registers, military conscription lists, and land plat maps. Choose the collection, enter the town name or choose it from an alphabetical list. Specify the time period and record type needed and click on “*rechercher*”. The response time tends to be slow. When the archive is offline, all searches result in “no response”.

The civil registration and church records are divided into small batches of up to 40 images, so it may be easier to work in smaller time spans, such as five or ten years at a time. The conditions of use must be accepted before the images can be accessed.

In the census section the results can be presented in three different ways: “Trier” = “sort”, “Cote (tri croissant) or (tri-décroissant)” = sort ascending or descending, or “Date” (by date). The “date” sort is useful, because it brings up a list of all the censuses available for that locality.

Military records available online include

- Conscription lists arranged by regiment (1850-1870)
- Conscription lists by canton (1867-1921)
- Alphabetical indexes

Additional research tools described on the home page can be accessed in the archive building. The service record page kept for each individual includes personal information, a physical description, and assignments received

The land plat maps available online date from 1807 to 1931 and are divided into three collections: the Napoleonic land plat maps, renovated maps, and revised maps. Links to detailed user-instructions and an inventory are found in the sidebar, along with helpful background information (in French).

Image and local history collections can provide interesting background material for a family history. The historic post cards can be downloaded.

### **Territoire de Belfort - 90.**

Among the resources available on the departmental archive website

<http://www.archives.territoiredebelfort.fr> are themed exhibit catalogs that can be read online. The website header includes three inconspicuous options for searching the archival holdings: *recherche simple* (simple search), *recherche thématique* (search by topic), and *recherche géographique* (geographical search). The topical search brings up several options, including

- *Rechercher dans tous les fonds* (research in all collections) -basically a search of the archive holdings, on- and offline.
- *Rechercher dans la presse* – Research in a limited number of newspapers

- *Rechercher dans les recensements* – research in the census records (19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)
- *Rechercher dans les matricules militaires* – research in the military records (indexes for the classes 1867 to 1940 and conscription papers for the classes 1867 to 1921)
- *Rechercher dans l'état civil* – Research in the civil registration records
- Recherche dans les documents figures – research in historic post cards and photographs
- *Rechercher dans le cadastre et les plans* – research in the land records and maps
- *Rechercher dans les expositions* – research in the exhibits

Civil registration records and parish registers for the Territoire de Belfort are found online at [http://www.archives.territoiredebelfort.fr/?id=etat\\_civil](http://www.archives.territoiredebelfort.fr/?id=etat_civil) .They range from the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century until 1902. Searches can be done by community and/or date, and results include references to all jurisdictions involved (i.e. if a place had belonged to several parishes over time). Adobe Flashplayer is required to view the images.

## **Anabaptists**

The Mennonite Encyclopedia online includes a good overview of Anabaptist settlements in Alsace at [http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Alsace\\_\(France\)](http://gameo.org/index.php?title=Alsace_(France)) . Of particular interest may be a 1780 listing of Anabaptist families in the areas of Ferrette (Haut-Rhin), Colmar (Haut-Rhin), Sélestat, Haguenau, Saverne, Belfort, and Wissembourg (FS Film 1071766 item 4 or 1166000 item 2).