

Family Research

Your Interest

Every family has its own unique history. Is your interest

- to know more about the origins, social standing or trade of your ancestors?
- to follow a family line as far back as records go?
- to investigate the route – or fate – of a particular individual or family in the historical upheavals of emigration or war?
- to clarify family relationships and locate potential relatives?
- to confirm often-told family stories; completing, correcting or even refuting them?
- a private interest for yourself and your family, or will it be of interest to a larger public?

It is often the case that the act of compiling your current information and establishing the documents you have available to show me will shape your research query, which then provides me with a clear objective.

Your Query

Any enquiry is completely confidential and entirely without obligation; trust and confidentiality are indispensable and elemental for both parties. Contact is generally conducted via email, Skype or by telephone; we can also offer meetings in person in Berlin. The more precise your query, and the more information you can provide in advance (including previous searches), the more confident we can be in our estimate of the scope and likelihood of a successful investigation.

Our Response

We will acknowledge receipt of your enquiry immediately. A few days may then pass while we carry out some preliminary investigations – these are free of charge and without cost to you. We may need to ask for more detail or scans of available documentation so as to provide a comprehensively accurate quotation.

Our Quotation

We generally provide quotations in writing, though if requested this may be provided over the telephone or via Skype. The quotation is tailored to your case and your inquiry, and comprises a

suggested strategy; a list of the steps the process will entail; an appropriate timescale of research (we generally offer work in blocks of 2-4, 5 or 10 hours) as well as information on foreseeable costs (archive fees, travel expenses etc.). We will inform you what information is likely to be obtainable and what new, further questions may arise from the information found, so as to provide you with a realistic picture of the scope of the research task and its ancillary costs. There is however – given the many gaps in the historical records – no absolute guarantee of success in genealogical research, but drawing on our years of experience we can make a realistic assessment of the demand of research time a particular project will entail and the prospects of its outcome.

Our Research

Once the scope, costs and timeframe have been agreed we set to work immediately. Depending on the circumstances, this may involve our own searches of databases and archives, or entail engaging partner researchers for access to archives in other localities. Certain archives, government agencies and other institutions may be limited to enquiries in writing; these cases may involve some period of awaiting a response; we submit reminders at regular intervals so as to expedite the research, and you will receive regular progress reports from us by email, telephone or on Skype.

Results

On completion of the research we will supply you with our report, or the results in the form agreed upon. This usually comprises a family tree, copies of original documents, transcriptions and/or translations, and suggested further lines of enquiry. The family tree is in the form of a GEDCOM file (.ged); this widely-used genealogical format is easily exported and adaptable. We are of course available – using email, telephone or Skype – to answer any questions in regard to the report, the sources, or our searches. Our work is generally completed once the report has been sent, any questions arising answered, and payment made. Should a continuation of the research be appropriate and requested, we will gladly issue a fresh quotation.