

EWZ Questions and Answers

by Elli Wise and Carolyn Schott

Why are EWZs important?

The EWZ microfilms contain several different types of forms for processing naturalization applications for ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe returning to Germany during the years 1939 through early 1945. EWZ records are the only information we have available on many families during the WWII era. Without these records, we may never have known what happened to these families.

These can be important even for those whose families were already in North America during WWII, as their siblings and cousins would have filled out EWZ forms documenting their family.

What does EWZ stand for?

EWZ stands for Einwanderungszentralstelle or Central Immigration Control Department. All ethnic Germans resettling from countries in Eastern Europe back to Germany were required to fill out a number of forms to request naturalization as German citizens.

The EWZ records are part of the Berlin Document Collection. This collection was seized by the U.S. and Allied Forces in April 1945 at the end of WWII and ended up in the National Archives near Washington, D.C. These records are also available in Germany's Bundesarchiv. Although about 80,000 records were destroyed by the Nazis before the collection was captured, the records available cover 1-2 million individuals and consist of 7,320 rolls of microfilm.

Are there different types of EWZ records?

Yes! Each person should have an application form, a health card, and a Stammbblatt that documents their family details. However, it is often difficult to find all three for a specific individual.

The application forms are the most detailed of the three types, with the most family information. The application form series most relevant to Black Sea Germans are the EWZ-50s (for those originating from the USSR, such as Odessa, Nikolaev, and Kherson) and the EWZ-51s (for those originating from Romania, such as Bessarabia and Dobruja). Less relevant to Black Sea Germans are the EWZ-52s, EWZ-53s, and EWZ-54s for those originating from Poland, the Baltics, and other places.

The health cards (EWZ-57s) cover people from all geographic areas. They usually include a photo of the individual and sometimes contain information on the individual's siblings. (Other EWZ records only include parent/grandparents/children.) They also contain information on health and physical characteristics.

The Stammblaetter (EWZ-58s) cover people from all geographic areas. The Stammbblatt is meant to document the individual's German lineage, including parents and grandparents. In many cases, this is simply a copy of the first page of the application form.

What information will I find in a EWZ record?

Each person age 15 or over has their own EWZ form. They were required to bring all available certificates (Russian passports, Ukrainian IDs, IDs of German origin such as a Volkslist, and birth, baptism and marriage records) to have their EWZ form processed for naturalization.

The applications (EWZ 50s and 51s) include surname, first name, birth date, birthplace, last place of residence, name of parents, name of children, their birth and death dates. The individual was also required to write their Lebenslauf (life story) in either German or Russian.

EWZs may also indicate the individual's status as single, married, widowed, etc. with dates, if known. The researcher can find information about family members such as whether the person was living, deceased, shot, verschleppt (taken away), verbannt (banished), missing, serving as a soldier, etc. They are typed and easy to read—one does not need to know the German language fluently.

The applications also contain a form that can reflect three or four generations of the individual's family, depending on the memory of the applicant. This form shows the father and mother, parents of both, grandparents of both, and the children. Usually the grandparents do not have birth dates, and in some cases neither do parents or spouses.

The application form for one spouse may show data not included on their spouse's application. In addition, it's helpful to check for application forms for an individual's children, parents, and grandparents, if they were alive at the time of the family's repatriation to Germany during WWII. This widens the scope of the data and it is possible to find information with birth dates going back to the 1800s.

The applications may also contain a Feststellung der Deutschstämmigkeit (determination of German origin), which is a form with a family tree that shows ancestry (no dates) and whether the person is ethnic German or of mixed nationality (mostly found in the EWZ-50 series). You may also find citizenship application forms called Einbuergerungsantraege or a copy of a citizenship certificate called the Abschrift der Einbuergerungsurkunde, Hitler Jugend Umsiedler Personalkarte (Hitler Youth resettler passport), Volkstums Ausweis (Russian, Romanian or German passports), and other correspondence. Forms may indicate to which Herd (head of household) a person belongs.

The application forms often refer to the Stichtag, the effective date of the application, and the Durchschleusung, when the forms were processed.

The Stammblatt (EWZ-58) is often a copy of the first page of the application. It includes basic information about the individual (birth date, birthplace, last place of residence) as well as parents and grandparents.

The health card (EWZ-57) often includes a photo of the individual, basic health and physical characteristics. Some include a history of the individual's occupations, his/her children, and sometimes his/her siblings. The EWZ-57 may also include a history of the places a person has lived and their possessions (farmland, animals, etc.).

What will I find on a citizenship certificate?

The citizenship certificate for a family, which is included in the EWZ application form, will show birth dates, birthplaces and last residence of the head of household. It only shows the wife's maiden name, but no birth date unless the certificate is issued to a widow. It does show the children's birth dates and birthplaces. For a single person's certificate, the information includes date of birth, birthplace, and last residence.

The citizenship certificate reflects the EWZ number of the individual or the Herdvorstand (head of household). The EWZ number is found on bottom left corner under “Tgb. Nr.” (It may have /I or /II added like 222222/I or 222222/II.)

Will I always find a citizenship certificate?

No, not in all cases. It is possible that citizenship was refused, that particular document was not among the collected documents, or the person had died, was taken away, banished or even may have chosen to remain in Russia.

Is knowing the EWZ number important?

The application forms (such as the EWZ-50s and EWZ-51s) and the health cards (EWZ-57s) are in alphabetical order so you do not need the EWZ number to find your family. However, the EWZ-58s are in numerical order, so to find these, you do need the number. Find out more information on [finding EWZ records](#).

Are the EWZ records focused on a specific region, such as the Odessa region, or do they cover all of South Russia?

The EWZ forms cover all people who repatriated to Germany during WWII. The health cards (EWZ-57s) and Stammblaetter (EWZ-58s) include ethnic Germans from all regions. However, the application forms are organized by people’s place of origin.

- * The EWZ-50 series covers ethnic Germans originating from the USSR, including Odessa, Nikolaev, Kherson, etc. Series is compiled in alphabetical order by surname.
- * The EWZ-51 series covers ethnic Germans originating from Romania, including Bessarabia, Dobrudscha, and Bukovina. Series is compiled in alphabetical order by surname.
- * The EWZ-52 series covers ethnic Germans originating from Poland.
- * The EWZ-53 series covers ethnic Germans originating from the Baltic countries.
- * Other series cover ethnic Germans from Yugoslavia (541), France (542), Bulgaria (543) and Süd Tirol (545).

Are the EWZ microfilms available at the LDS Family History Library?

The EWZ-57 and EWZ-58 series are both held at the Family History Library on microfilm that must be viewed at the library. They are not available online at FamilySearch nor through a remote look-up request. One exception is that EWZ-58s for ethnic Germans from Poland are available online through FamilySearch. EWZ application forms (EWZ-50, 51, 52, 53, 54) are not available at the Family History Library.

For more information on finding EWZ records, see [Finding and Viewing EWZ Film](#)

What is the cost to purchase a EWZ film and where can I purchase these?

These can be purchased through NARA (the National Archives). As of June 2022, an EWZ microfilm costs \$125. For more information, please go to:

<http://www.archives.gov/research/order/microfilm-pubs.html#cost>.

Will I be able to read EWZ records? What language are they in?

Most forms are typed and easy to read. Although the language is German, the names, dates, and places are the same as in English. The Lebenslauf is written in script by the applicant.

Are the EWZ records indexed?

All of the EWZ-50s and about 20% of the EWZ-51s are indexed in the [Black Sea German database](#). The purpose of indexing these EWZ records is to lead the researcher to the films and frames or to a certain individual. Data can be found more readily without having to reel through the entire sets of films. Also, various family members can appear on various films and the indexes can quickly point to that. However, a researcher must go to the actual record to find the detailed information.

The index does not reveal if any of these persons actually gained German citizenship, or had been taken away, were sent to Siberia, were deceased, were widowed, married, single, and so on. Most of such information can be found within the actual record.

Note that in some cases, you will find duplicate entries for the same person in the Black Sea German database. This often happens when the individual has their own EWZ record, and then is also mentioned in their children's EWZ records. As of June 2022, we are in the process of consolidating those entries wherever possible. However, when the two entries are in separate trees in the database, we are not able to combine these.

The EWZ-50s and many of the EWZ-51s are also indexed at [Odessa2](#). However, those indexes are less complete as they excluded names of parents and grandparents if the EWZ form didn't show birth dates for these people. They also excluded any information about the individual's religion and location at the time the EWZ was processed.

What is the difference between an EWZ file and the files called DAI files?

The EWZ series covers only the naturalization-related documents for ethnic Germans returning to Germany from 1939-1945. The DAI (Deutsches Ausland Institute or German Institute of Foreign Countries) series contains records collected during the entire span of time that Germans lived in the Black Sea region (late 1700s through WWII). Many of the DAI records were collected by Dr. Karl Stumpp during WWII.

Are there any tips I should know for using EWZs?

We're glad you asked that—yes!

- * Search for EWZs for the women in the family, not just the male head of households. For families coming from the USSR, many of the men had already been arrested and executed by WWII and were not able to return to Germany. And it's often the case that mothers know more accurate birth date/location information for their children than the fathers do.

- * Assess the accuracy of the information by identifying who filled out the EWZ form. An individual is more likely to have accurate information about themselves than they might know about their spouse's parents or grandparents.

- * Read the Lebenslauf (personal history) if there is one as this often has more details about where that individual lived, previous marriages, and other important details that aren't included in the standard forms.

[Samples of EWZ forms](#)

All EWZ-50s and about 20% of the EWZ-51s are indexed in the [Black Sea German database](#).