This article is about using the online data base „INVENIO" from the Bundesarchiv (German Federal Archive) to find records related to ancestors.

The Bundesarchiv has a huge amount of records originating from e.g. the Einwanderungszentrale (EWZ), Wehrmacht, NSDAP, restitution („Lastenausgleich") and Deutsches Auslands Institut (DAI). When searching in Invenio for a specific person you might have hits from these and other areas of origin.
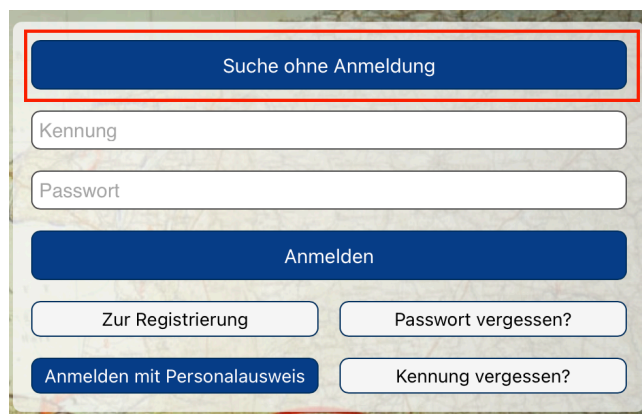
In this article I focus on records from the Einwanderungszentrale (EWZ).
Please be aware that processes to request records from other origins than EWZ might be different.

1. **How to access Invenio?**
   Invenio is accessible via https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de
   For searching the data base you don't need to register. Just click on „Suche ohne Anmeldung" on the main page.

2. **How to search for records in Invenio?**
   Invenio offers different ways to search the data base. For finding EWZ records I recommend to use the name search.

   I personally recommend to use Surname and Given Name as search parameters, and only if you have too many hits, use additional parameters (e.g. birth year). I don't recommend to activate the check-box „Nur Treffer mit Digitalisaten anzeigen", as this reduces the hits to records that have been already digitized (which is not given for many of the EWZ records).

3. **How to work with the search results?**
   Records originating from the Einwanderungszentrale can be identified based on their **„Bestandsbezeichung"**: „Sammlung Berlin Document Center (BDC): Personenbezogene Unterlagen der Einwandererzentralstelle (EWZ)"**.**

   Every record provides several meta data:
   - Archivsignatur = Unique identifier, needed when communicating with the Bundesarchiv
   - Bestandsbezeichung = should be „Sammlung Berlin Document….." for EWZ files

- Name and birthdate of the person
- EWZ-Nummer = the unique identifier people received during registration in the re-location camps
- Herdvorstand = „JA" means the person was named as the head of household within the EWZ record
- if other people were recorded in the EWZ file (e.g. children, spouse), their names and birthdates will be included. Married women will show up twice, with their maiden name and with their married name.

You can also click on „Im Kontext anzeigen" at the bottom of the record. With that you might get additional meta data and in addition you can see the meta data of the files coming before and after.

4. **Are the files online available in Invenio?**
   If the file has already been digitized, there is a link „**Digitalisat anzeigen**" at the bottom. By clicking on it, a new browser tab will open and you will get direct access to the file. Please ensure that your pop-up blocker is deactivated.

   ⊜ Im Kontext anzeigen   ↗ Digitalisat anzeigen
   🔗 Link kopieren

   If the file includes data that are still protected by law, you might get an error message stating that this file can only be viewed on-site in the archive after your identity and valid interest has been checked. But for the EWZ-50 files this should typically not be the case.

   If the link is missing, the file has not been digitized so far.

5. **The file I'm interested in has not been digitized so far. What to do now?**

   The Bundesarchiv offers digitization on demand („Digitalisierung on Demand"), currently limited to 10 files in total.

   The detailed process and all necessary information is described here: **https://www.bundesarchiv.de/im-archiv-recherchieren/archivgut-einsehen-und-nutzen/ digitalisate/**

   Enclosed some recommendation based on my own experience for the EWZ-50s:

   For the EWZ files you can reach out to them via informal email (**berlin@bundesarchiv.de**).

   - Your request must state the reason why you want to have access to the file (e.g. „genealogy purposes. The file I'm interested in is about my great grandfather").

   - You should also give them the Archivsignatur of the file (= unique identifier), as well as Surname, Given Name, Birthdate of the person you are interested.

   (Please note that the EWZ-50 identifiers from the BSGR data base will not work. The Bundesarchiv has the original paper files in their archive. They are not working with the microfilms, to which the unique identifiers from BSGR refer to).

   - You should request a „Digitalisierung on Demand" of the file

   - if you are already a registered Invenio user and with that have already filed a

„Benutzerantrag", I recommend to state your INVENIO USER ID in the request, as this might ease up the process when it comes to records that are still protected by law.

- give them a budget that they are allowed to spend for your request
The Bundesarchiv might charge you a fee based on the efforts they have (time and material base). I typically give them a certain budget for this request that they are allowed to spend. In addition I ask them to come back to me beforehand, if the budget will be exceeded.

What's next:
Based on your email the Bundesarchiv will then check, whether the file is still protected by law If yes, they will come back to you and you will need to fill out a Benutzerantrag, if you haven't done before. For more details check their process description for „Digitalisierung on Demand".

To my experience most of the EWZ-50s are not protected by law any longer and it should be a pretty smooth process.

Once the file has been digitized they will provide it via Invenio: „Digitalisat anzeigen" will show up at the bottom of the entry. Alternatively (or in addition) they might also send you a download link („Archivbox") via email (which is typically the case, if the file is still protected by law and will not be published in Invenio).

The quality of the digital copies is pretty good. As already stated, the Bundesarchiv has the original paper files as a source, which for sure leads to a completely different quality than pulling copies from an microfilm.

6. **Does the Bundesarchiv also have other EWZ files (e.g. EWZ-57 health cards)?**

   The Bundesarchiv also has health cards available (which often provide more information on e.g. siblings, their married name and whether they have already been re-located. Information you will often not find in the EWZ-50s).

   However, they are not indexed (= you will not find them in Invenio search) and due to the health data included, they are still protected by law. As of August 2025, it is not expected that these files will be available in Invenio in the near future.

   Getting access to these files will - from my understanding - require a registration with a „Benutzerantrag" and acceptance of their terms (e.g. you are not allowed to share the files with others). That also means that once the files have been digitized they will solely provide them to you via a download link („Archivbox").

   Based on my experience, when you request a „Digitalisierung on Demand" for an EWZ-50 file, they also check in the background whether they have a „Karteikarte" (which is their name for the EZW-57). They will let you know, if they have one.
   That's why I recommend that registered users (that have already filed a Benutzerantrag), include their Invenio User ID in the initial request, as this might ease up the whole process.

7. **Any other recommendations?**

   If you are just interested in the EWZ-50s, and they are indexed in the BSGR data base, I recommend to use other sources mentioned by BSGR to get copies of the records, as their processes are much easier and faster.

   I personally only go the route via the Bundesarchiv for close relatives (e.g. my great grandfather and his children), to check whether other records (e.g. EWZ-57) are available that might provide me additional information.

8. **Are there other records publicly available in Invenio that are worth to mention?**
   The Bundesarchiv has published many files from the Deutsches Auslands Institut (DAI), including the **revision lists**, which provided lots of value to me when working on my own family tree. The revision lists also include some hand-written comments that obviously have been added at a later time, giving e.g. the origin of the settlers or correcting surnames.

   Direct link to the revision lists of „**Odessa and Beresaner Gebiete**", Archivsignatur: „R 57/11669":
   https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/64616823-2f75-4003-a851-9ebc6f8d5235/

   Direct link to the revision lists of „**Kutschurganer and Schwarzmeergebiet**", Archivsignatur: „R 57/11670":
   https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/ec587d42-774b-49b3-8244-feb62ea87d56/

   Direct link to revision lists of „**Glückstaler Gebiet**", Archivsignatur: „R 57/11671":
   https://invenio.bundesarchiv.de/invenio/direktlink/1dbc69b6-a0df-47f6-aaff-8c9f2cc9ae6d/