



## Property notices

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### Origins of the holdings

With the enactment of the *Verordnung über die Anmeldung des Vermögens von Juden* (“Ordinance on the Registration of Jewish Property”) of 26 April 1938 (German Reich Law Gazette 1938 I p. 414, Austrian Law Gazette 102/1938) all persons who were considered Jewish pursuant to the *Nürnberger Gesetze* (“Nuremberg Laws”) of 1935 (German Reich Law Gazette 1935 I p. 1146, Austrian Law Gazette 150/1938) as well as non-Jewish spouses, had to individually register their domestic and foreign assets and that of their family members living in a shared household, valued as per 27 April 1938. Jews who were not German nationals were required to register their domestic assets. All persons covered by this Ordinance with gross assets exceeding 5,000 Reichsmark (notwithstanding liabilities) were subject to this obligation. The assets which were to be registered were listed in a four-page form which had to be submitted in triplicate. The assets were to be stated in several categories, with details as to their quality and “communal” value. The property notices had to be submitted by 30 June 1938 under threat of punishment in the case of non-compliance. Jews with their main residence abroad were granted a deadline of 31 June 1938. After these dates, significant changes to assets also had to be registered.

The *Vermögensverkehrsstelle* (“Property Transaction Office”), established at the Ministry for the Economy and Labor since May 1938, was responsible for the property notices. The following, related intentions were the main reasons for creating a central record of Jewish assets:

- acquisition of a detailed overview of assets as a means of preparing a successive legal process of intervention in property ownership statuses up to the achievement of the seizure of ownership,
- economy-based collection of information on the ordered “aryanization” or liquidation of businesses, operations, enterprises and subsidiaries deemed to be Jewish,
- state control of Jewish assets in view of so called “wild aryanizations” in the days and weeks following the *Anschluss* and
- securing a share of the assets for the German state, be it through “aryanization taxes and fees”, the “Reich Flight Tax” for emigrating Jews or the “Jewish capital levy” which was introduced at a later date.

### Contents of the files

In addition to the forms for the property notice, the enclosures and an encoded statistic sheet in which assets are recorded according to type of assets and value, the files may also contain various documents:

- Notifications on changes to assets,
- orders regarding the Reich Flight Tax and Jewish capital levy,
- orders to submit stocks and bonds
- personal letters and correspondence with the authorities,
- settlement of accounts of the auction house Dorotheum within the scope of the “Ordinance on the Use of Jewish Property of 3 December 1938” regarding the delivery of valuable metals and jewelry (German Reich Law Gazette 1938 I p. 1709 ff., Article IV, Sec. 14, Austrian Law Gazette 633/1938),
- company balance sheets, inventories and valuation reports.

Upon the nominal transfer of the responsibilities of the Reich Governor in Vienna to the newly created *Reichsgaue* (“Reich regions”) by the *Ostmarkgesetz* (“Ostmark Law” of 1 May 1939, German Reich Law Gazette 1939 I p. 777 ff., Austrian Law Gazette 500/1939) and with it, on 15 November 1939 the partial transfer of the responsibilities of the Property Transaction Office, the property notices and the work involved in dealing with them was ceded to the Reich regions. The holdings of the former Property Transaction Office Vienna contain only a file memo regarding the transfer in such cases and in the best case scenario, also a statistic sheet.

The name and file number of related property notices (e.g. of family members) can be found on an orange-red sheet which has been stuck on to the first page of the property notice, if it has remained intact.

### Informational content

The form contains the details of the person who filed the notice (surname, forename, profession, address, date of birth, nationality and religion or “race”). Additionally, the “race” or religion of the spouse had to be entered, as well as the spouse’s maiden name where applicable. This was followed by questions about domestic and foreign assets in the categories: real estate, company assets, stocks and shares, loan and mortgage claims, jewelry, insurance policies and possible pension payments. Finally, the person filing the notice was ordered to state their debts.

The personal details, detailed information on assets and their value and the notices of amendment given in the property notices provide vital indications of individual’s assets and their further use or utilization. Beyond the valuations, the detailed statements in the main categories “Agricultural and silvicultural assets”, “Real estate (land, buildings)”, “Company assets” and “Other assets” serve as a good starting point for family and provenance research and for valuing losses.

#### Alternative sources of information

In isolated cases, copies or transcripts of property notices can be found in the files of the *Finanzlandesdirektion* (“Financial Directorate”) for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland (from the original holdings of the *Oberfinanzpräsident Wien-Niederdonau* [“Chief Finance President Vienna-Lower Danube”]).

If an application was filed for compensation of losses of assets of political persecutes (*Abgeltungsfonds* [“Compensation Fund”]), this file generally contains at least an excerpt from the property notice. Both the files series of the Financial Directorate for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland and that of the *Abgeltungsfonds* (“Compensation Fund”) are held at the Austrian State Archives.

The *Kartei der Abschriften der Vermögensmeldungen* (“Index of copies of property notices”) compiled by the *Sammelstellen A und B* (“Collection Agencies A and B”) also contains the informational content of the property notices; it is, however, not accessible to the public. As this index is in alphabetical order, the surname, forename and date of birth is required in order to receive the desired information.

For property notices which were transferred to the Reich regions outside of Vienna from November 1939, information stating the valuations given in the property notices can be found in the *Namenskartei der Vermögensmeldungen* (“Index of property notices according to surname”) of the former Property Transaction Office Vienna, although the quality of this information varies. These index cards only give more detailed information on real estate or company shares in exceptional cases. In Vienna, if the files were transferred to a Reich region, only information on the file number, the person and the name of the relevant Reich region remains. A statistic sheet containing a rudimentary summary of the assets can usually also be found attached.

#### Explanations and comments

The property notices cannot be considered accurate representations of the social and economic structure of the Austrian Jews: firstly, registration was only compulsory from gross assets of 5,000 Reichsmark, meaning there is no information on persons without assets or persons whose assets were worth less than this lower limit (property notices were also submitted in which only a monthly wage was entered, probably out of uncertainty). Secondly, people were able to leave Austria in the days before and weeks after the “*Anschluss*” in March 1938 without having to submit a property notice. Finally, it remains contentious—in the face of the state-ordered obligation to make a declaration and the punishments threatened – whether all assets were declared or only a fraction of them, or if a certain room for interpretation was applied in the valuations.

If a person who was obliged to file a property notice was staying or living abroad, his/her property notice was dealt with by the Chief Finance President Berlin-Brandenburg. Consequently, property notices, supplementations and notices of amendment can also be found in the Berlin Federal Archives.

Each property notice received by the Property Transaction Office was given a consecutive file number. Later on, notices which were filed for amounts under the amount of 5,000 Reichsmark and were therefore not compulsory, were apparently allocated a number over 60,000. The file number which had subsequently been “freed up” was re-allocated to another property notice with the result that two people are occasionally listed under one number.

Property notices which were transferred to the Reich regions outside Vienna in 1938 or 1940 can be found in the competent Provincial Archives, filed according to surname (Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Burgenland or Styria). However, the holdings and access thereto are restricted in some cases. There are no property notices in the Provincial Archives of Carinthia, Salzburg, Vorarlberg and Tyrol.

#### Austrian State Archives

##### **Austrian State Archives/Archives of the Republic**

Record group: **Entschädigungs- und Restitutionsangelegenheiten** (“Compensation and restitution matters”) 1938–1945

Holdings: **Vermögensverkehrsstelle** (“Property Transaction Office”), 1938–1945

File series: **Vermögensmeldungen** (“Property notices”), 1938–1945

Abbreviation for this type of file: VA

The files series “property notices” at the Austrian State Archives is numbered through to file no. 47,800, albeit with occasional gaps. From this number up to file no. 66,600 the omissions become bigger. Moreover, experience has shown that the property notices with file numbers over 60,000 can be considered little more than fragments; this means that the property notice is often not accompanied by a form, but is rather a compilation of official letters and/or personal correspondence (often revealing no specific indications as to the person’s identity).

When the files were microfilmed by the Israeli Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem from 2007 onward, property notices were found which are not contained in the *Findbuch* by Hubert Steiner and Christian Kucsera *Recht als Unrecht, Quellen zur wirtschaftlichen Entrechtung der Wiener Juden durch die NS-Vermögensverkehrsstelle* (Austrian State Archives 1993). The General Settlement Fund incorporated this additional

information into its existing records.

Despite the checks carried out with the assistance of the “Index of names for the property notices” from the former Property Transaction Office, discrepancies were still discovered in spellings and dates of birth during random checks carried out when comparing the index of names and the original files. In such cases, the spelling in the original file was generally adopted. In isolated cases, two or more property notices with different numbers were able to be attributed to one person. As a rule, these were property notices with a number over 60,000.

Information on data processing: Property notices of the Property Transaction Office

## Burgenländisches Landesarchiv

Record group: **Forschungsarchiv** (“Research Archive”)

Holdings: **Behördliche Archivbestände** (“Authorities’ archive holdings”)

Sub-holdings: **Arisierungsakten (Nordburgenland und Südburgenland)** (“Aryanization files [North Burgenland and South Burgenland]”), 1938–1945

File series: **Vermögensanmeldungen NÖ, Verzeichnis über das Vermögen von Juden** (“Property notices Lower Austria, list of Jewish property”)

Abbreviation for this type of file: VA

The list of the *Vermögensanmeldungen NÖ, Verzeichnis über das Vermögen von Juden* (“Property notices Lower Austria, list of Jewish property”) was sent to the General Settlement Fund by the Burgenländisches Landesarchiv in digital form in June 2012. The property notices are a sub-holdings of the *Arisierungsakten (Nordburgenland und Südburgenland)* (“Aryanization files [North Burgenland and South Burgenland]”), 1938–1945 and are stored in box number 67. It consists of 140 individual files relating – with only few exceptions – to North Burgenland, i.e. the geographical territory which belonged to the Reich region Lower Danube during the National Socialist era. Besides these sub-holdings, it is sometimes also possible to find property notices as partial documents in the individual aryanization files, despite the fact that they are not explicitly stated.

Information on data processing: Property notices - Burgenland

## Lower Austrian Provincial Archive

Record group: **02. Landesfürstliche und staatliche Verwaltung bis 1945** (“Sovereign and state administration up to 1945”)

Holdings: **02.04. Reichsstatthalter Niederdonau (staatl. Verwaltung)** (“Reich Governor Lower Danube [‘state administration’]”)

Sub-holdings: **02.04.02.04.04. Unterabteilung IVd** (“Sub-department IVd”)

File series: **VA**

Abbreviation for this type of file: VA

The Lower Austrian Provincial Archives provided the digitized list of property notices to the National Fund in July 2019. The holding comprises the property notices of slightly more than 3,000 individuals. In addition to the Lower Austrian notices, it also contains property notices from districts in Southern Moravia (Neubistritz, Znaim and Nikolsburg) belonging to the Reich region Lower Austria, from Brno and Prague; in part from peripheral municipalities that had once belonged to Lower Austria and were subsequently allocated to the Reich Region Greater Vienna; and notices from Tyrol and, in part, from Vorarlberg.

Information on data processing:

## Archives of Upper Austria

Record Group: **Weitere Bestände** (“further holdings”)

Holdings: **Sonderbestände** (“special holdings”)

Sub-holdings: **Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Linz** (“Jewish Community Linz”), 1938–1945

File series: **Vermögensanmeldungen** (“property notices”)

Abbreviation for this type of file: VA

The file holdings *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Linz* (“Jewish Community Linz”) of the Archives of Upper Austria were accepted by Josef Goldberger on behalf of the Archives of Upper Austria from the Jewish Community Linz in 2002. The files were handed over in the form of 13 fascicles (fascicle 1–13). The Archives then distributed these among 14 archive boxes for reasons of conservation. The concordance between the old fascicle numbers and the new box numbers can be gathered from an index containing the relevant information on each file.

The holdings are comprised of the file series property notices (formerly: fascicles 1–3, now: boxes 1–4) and aryanization files on Austrian companies (formerly: fascicles 4–13, now: boxes 5–14). The property notices from the holdings “Jewish Community Linz” of the Archives of Upper Austria relate to persons who were considered Jewish pursuant to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 (German Reich Law Gazette 1935 I p. 1146, Austrian Law Gazette 150/1938) and resided in Upper Austria or in the Reich region Böhmerwald (“Bohemian Woods”, southern Bohemia). Property notices from persons from the Reich region Bohemian Woods were not allocated a number. This is because the “Sudeten territories” were not joined with the German Reich until autumn 1938 and the registration of Jewish assets by means of the property notices had already been completed by then. These notices are therefore recorded in the Findbuch with the remark “no number”. The property notices in the Archives of Upper Austria are not ordered by file number but alphabetically, by name of the persecutee.

Information on data processing: Property notices – Upper Austria (holdings of the Jewish Community Linz)