Fold 3 by Ancestry

In olden days (yeah, I just said “olden days”), accessing primary sources was difficult. To find a painting, you’d have to visit a museum or research it in a book…That’s right, a book. If you wanted access to original newspapers from World War II, you’d have to visit the hoarder on your block and pray for papers. Or you’d have to find a library with access to microfiche—(That’s a sheet of very small photographs that make up microform. Essentially documents were scaled down so they could fit on a tiny sheet that was then projected onto a screen. You couldn’t check it out, so you’d have to sit at the back of the library to do all of your research.) Poor old people; they had it rough.

Today, we still practice traditional methods of physically archiving documents. However, we also participate in digital archiving. This allows us to access those newspapers, photos, and documents by performing a simple search in the right engine.

The engine we will use is Fold3 by Ancestry. This site hosts The Holocaust Collection, where you can access personal stories that family members and survivors have archived online. There is also access to primary source documents such as military records, birth and death certificates, census information, and looted valuables.

To navigate the site, you’ll need to be patient and willing to engage in a little exploration. While we can give you tips, you will need to get in touch with your inner-Magellan.

Use these sites: <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/> or <http://www.ancestryclassroom.com/> ***They will only work when you are at school!***

Personal Accounts: Go to <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/> and select “Stories” from the menu. This will bring up a collage of pictures. As you hover over a picture, a name will appear. Click on a picture, and you his or her page will appear. On the left-hand side, a guide will be available. Select “Stories” to review his or her experience in World War II.

Camps: Go to <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/> and select “Concentration Camps” from the menu. This will bring up a list of camps. Select one. For example, if you select “Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland” you would find a summary of what Auschwitz is known for, as well as pictures, personal stories connected to it, and (under “Place Details”) general statistics regarding deaths. You can select the documents or photos to enlarge.

Looted Valuables (Paintings, Jewelry, etc.): Go to <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/> and select “Looted Valuables” from the menu. A list of collections will appear. Select a list. For example, if you click on “OMGUS—Monuments, Fine Arts, Archive,” it will pull up a series of lists for you. This is where your search begins. Select from the “Series” column. For example, if you select “Maps,” an additional list pops up. If you select “Germany Hand Zone Books” photographs appear on the right side. Select one. If you select page 1, a photo of the first page of this collection appears. You can click on the arrow on the right to move to the next photo OR select “Open Film Strip” at the bottom of the page, which will allow you to see thumbnails of all 600+ documents; then you can select from the thumbnails.

Military Records:

Route 1 (Personal Connections/Accounts): Do you know someone who served during WWII? Use the <http://www.ancestryclassroom.com/> to find their records. For example, I know my grandpa couldn’t serve due to age and health restrictions, but I know his brothers did. I can’t recall their names, so I go to the Ancestry site, type in the last name “Womble,” I’ll guess the birth year around 1920, and insert “Kentucky, USA” in the location. Once I search, I’ll narrow the field to “Military” records on the left side of the screen. As I scroll through the right side of the screen, I notice the name “Rafe.” That rings a bell, so I select it. This gives me the details of his service. (JUST FYI: If I back out to the main menu and search Rafe by full name and birth date, I can access his full information, including accessing the family tree, which dates back to the late 1700s.)

I can also search by location. For example, on <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/>, I can select the “National Archives” and simply hit the “Search” button without entering specifics. In the next search, I’ll specify “Glasford, IL.” Then, I’ll narrow it down to “Old Man Draft Cards” which will allow me to see original military records for men in our town.

Route 2 (General Documentation): Go to: <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/> and select the “National Archives” and simply hit the “Search” button without entering specifics. Then select from the lists. If you select “World War II Captured German Records,” you can access photos of those documents. Be patient—Some records are in other languages. You may have trouble interpreting them, but some people have annotated them with translations. Hover over words to see if they have been translated.

War Crimes Documents: Go to: <http://go.fold3.com/holocaust/> and select the “National Archives” and select “German War Crimes.” Then hit the “search” button without entering specifics. Select the photos you’d like to view—Note some are lists, but some are documents detailing crimes. Be patient—some are written in other languages. Some have a brief explanation of the document. Whether you can interpret them or not, these are still valuable historical documents worth viewing.

Photos: Use either site for this. On Fold3, you can access personal photos under “Stories;” maps and photos of victims and officers under “Concentration Camps;” famous artwork, valuable jewelry, monuments, etc. under “Looted Valuables;” and other materials under “National Archives.

To Find Information on a Specific Person: \*\*\*This is the same as Route 1 of Military Records: Use the <http://www.ancestryclassroom.com/> . For example, I know my grandpa couldn’t serve due to age and health restrictions, but I know his brothers did. I can’t recall their names, so I go to the Ancestry site, type in the last name “Womble,” I’ll guess the birth year around 1920, and insert “Kentucky, USA” in the location. Once I search, I’ll narrow the field to “Military” records on the left side of the screen. As I scroll through the right side of the screen, I notice the name “Rafe.” That rings a bell, so I select it. \*\*\*In this section, you can narrow your search to something other than “Military” to find what fits your needs\*\*\*