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**ACCESS TO ARCHIVAL EVIDENCE OF NAZI-ERA LOOTING ACCELERATES
WITH AI ON JDCRP'S "LEGACY EXPLORER" PLATFORM**

JDCRP's Legacy Explorer connects archival collections documenting Nazi-era looting and is now expanding rapidly with the help of AI

The Jewish Digital Cultural Recovery Project Foundation (JDCRP) has announced a new phase of AI-powered expansion for its provenance platform, Legacy Explorer, which brings together Nazi-era looted art documents at a central digital address. The platform now allows users to cross-search five key archival document sets on Nazi-era looted art, with a sixth set planned for release later in August. With Legacy Explorer, users can easily search for information and view individual historical documents that help track the journey of artworks stolen by the Nazis. AI tools help make the documents searchable, and Linked Open Data connects documents across diverse collections, allowing users to identify related documentation about the same object across separate archives.

"In Legacy Explorer, the JDCRP seeks to create a central research resource for documentation of Nazi-era looting," said Dr. Wesley A. Fisher, Deputy Chair of the JDCRP's Executive Board—and one of the original architects of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume. "The platform addresses an urgent gap in provenance research: the lack of a single place where experts and the general public can easily search across archival collections and access the historical documentation of an object's provenance."

The looted art campaign against Jewish owners by the Nazis, their allies, and collaborators was the largest theft of cultural property in history. The spoliation of Jewish-owned property began in Germany, with Nazi art officials fanning out across Europe, confiscating and plundering hundreds of thousands of valuable artworks. Many of the objects are still missing, while others have reached the hands of new possessors who refuse to return the looted objects to their original and rightful owners.

To help owners and researchers locate more missing looted objects, JDCRP's Legacy Explorer strives to provide authentic and verifiable transcriptions of archival material, enabling the documentary evidence of object movement to be searched online. Working with archives in Germany, France, and the United States, the JDCRP has been collecting and digitizing documents about Nazi-era theft and postwar recovery of looted objects.

“For the first time, there is a platform that delivers archival evidence from multiple sources documenting Nazi-era cultural theft,” said Deidre Berger, Chair of the JDCRP’s Executive Board. “JDCRP has successfully piloted a pathbreaking cross-archival search, benefiting both from a new generation of AI document scanning tools and from our network of 21 partner organizations connected to major archives worldwide. For descendants of survivors, Legacy Explorer’s expansion will provide a path to trace the journey of cultural property stolen from their families.”

“The JDCRP initially transcribed archival documents with traditional optical character recognition software, but has since begun to harness the possibilities of Large Language Models and AI tools,” explained Lizzy Jongma, Product Owner for Legacy Explorer at JDCRP. “Using these technologies, the JDCRP has developed a specialized workflow for transcribing historical documents, typed and handwritten, across various languages.” The platform is distinguished by a high level of accuracy in the transcriptions it provides. Archival material scanned and digitized in earlier decades without AI assistance contains more frequent errors, requiring extensive time and human intervention to achieve a viable degree of accuracy.

Launched in December 2025, Legacy Explorer incorporates the entirety of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg (ERR) Jeu de Paume database, an online platform of documents originally produced by the principal Nazi agency responsible for the seizure of cultural property. Legacy Explorer also provides more than 14,000 additional records from four other archival collections that document stolen objects largely recovered postwar by the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Section Unit of the U.S. Allied Forces at its Wiesbaden and Marburg Central Collecting Points. In recent weeks, JDCRP has begun adding information from the Munich Central Collecting Point, by far the largest of the U.S. depots set up for recovered looted art. The first releases from the Munich Central Collecting Point document objects transferred to the Jewish Restitution Successor Organization and objects internally restituted in Germany under Military Government Law No. 59.

“It is commendable that Legacy Explorer provides access to documents from various backgrounds that reflect different stages in the histories of looted objects, from the Nazis’ own meticulous documentation of their looting measures to the records that document Allied Forces’ efforts to recover property,” said Adjunct Prof. Dr. Christian Fuhrmeister from the Central Institute for Art History. “As the volume of documents grows, the platform will become increasingly impactful for tracing the broader, complex scope of cultural theft.”

Legacy Explorer was built to address one of the core challenges in provenance research: evidence of a single looted object’s journey may be dispersed across multiple archives, languages, and countries. Rather than requiring researchers to search individual collections separately, Legacy Explorer connects related records across archives and allows users to view different documents about a particular artwork—documents that may physically reside an ocean apart from one another—on a single page. In

some cases, users can follow an object's history from Nazi confiscation through Allied recovery and restitution efforts.

“Digital tools can transform the way we conduct provenance research,” said Prof. Dr. Meike Hopp, Executive Chair of the German Lost Art Foundation. “By bringing dispersed sources together, Legacy Explorer makes new connections visible and opens up new possibilities for research. The German Lost Art Foundation applauds this initiative and looks forward to seeing how it continues to evolve.”

With the foundation of Legacy Explorer now in place, the JDCRP’s priority is to accelerate the addition of archival documentation to the platform. In summer 2026, the JDCRP implemented a new AI-assisted workflow that allows archival material to be processed, prepared, and published more efficiently—while maintaining the accuracy and source transparency required for provenance research. The workflow is overseen and verified by experienced human reviewers.

With this workflow, Legacy Explorer is now entering a phase of continuous expansion, with plans to release new archival material on a regular basis through the remainder of 2026.

The expansion of Legacy Explorer is part of JDCRP’s broader work advancing archival documentation, research, and education on Nazi-era looting. The JDCRP is a central resource for information on provenance research, featuring extensive case studies, international exhibitions, online seminars, and lists documenting the names and biographies of Jewish artists and collectors who were persecuted during the Nazi era.

The JDCRP will announce new additions to Legacy Explorer as further archival datasets are processed and made available.

For further information, contact Greg Irwin, JDCRP Communications Officer, at greg.irwin@jdcrp.org.

Access Legacy Explorer at: explorer.RJLegacy.org

About the Jewish Digital Cultural Recovery Project Foundation (JDCRP): *The JDCRP was founded in Berlin in 2019 by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference) and the Commission for Art Recovery (CAR). The Foundation advances archival documentation, research, and education on the looting of Jewish-owned cultural property by the Nazis, their allies, and collaborators. The JDCRP is a nonprofit organization funded by the Claims Conference and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Finance (BMF) and the German Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM), with thanks to the European Union and Foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility, and Future” (EVZ) for additional project support. For more information, visit <https://jdcrp.org>.*