

Crossing the Pond: Successful Strategies for Researching Eastern European Ancestors

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Many people become interested in researching their Eastern European ancestors because they want to learn more about where their family came from—specifically, to find out which ancestors came over from the "old country" and when. To "cross the pond," you need to know the name of the town or village where your ancestor lived. In this session, traditional methods and online resources for tracking ancestors both in the U.S. and the old country will be discussed, as well as techniques for overcoming some of the most common obstacles and problems faced during the research process.

Overview

- Complications of Eastern European Genealogy
- How to find records over here and over there
- Before you cross the pond: What you *must* know
- Overcoming research challenges

Locating the Ancestral Village

- Check Maps, Gazetteers and/or Atlases (online and print)
- Identify location today (border/political changes)

Researching in Eastern Europe

- The Family History Library (FHL) has digitized and/or microfilmed some records for some countries; but not all records in all countries at this point.
- Records for several villages in one parish in larger, nearby town.
- Parish registers - usually kept in local parishes, but some available on microfilm or online via FamilySearch. Some records located in state or regional archives.
- Census Records, Tax Lists, Military Records, Local Histories, and Nobility Records may be available.
- Record types and availability and privacy laws will vary depending on locality.
- Records **not** in English; can be difficult to read and interpret.
- Languages/Alphabets: Cyrillic, Czech, German, Hungarian, Latin, Polish, Slovak
- Archives in Eastern European countries (records, policies, etc. will vary)
- Hire a professional researcher (often best option for many countries!)
- Establishing contacts in ancestral village (mayor or priest)—Use Google
- Genealogical and historical societies
- Social Networking: Facebook and Online forums

How to Read and Interpret Church/Civil Records

- Languages (Cyrillic, Greek, Hungarian, Latin, Slovak)
- Learn column headers and key words/phrases
- FamilySearch Word Lists
- Google Translate
- Genealogical Translations Page on Facebook

Eastern European Genealogy Research Toolkit

- Ancestry.com (\$) <https://www.ancestry.com>
- Balch Institute (Historical Society of PA) <https://hsp.org/about-us/the-balch-institute>
- Base Citizens of Ukraine database 1650-1920 <https://pra.in.ua>
- Bremen Passenger Lists (1920-1939) <http://www.passengerlists.de>
- CanGenealogy <http://www.cangenealogy.com>
- Cyndi's List Eastern Europe <https://www.cyndislist.com/eastern-europe>
- Czechoslovak Genealogical Society International <https://cgsi.org>
- Ellis Island Database <https://www.statueofliberty.org>
- FamilySearch/FamilySearch Wiki <https://www.familysearch.org/en>
- Foundation of East European Family History Studies <https://feefhs.org>
- Georeferencing Mapping Resource Hug <http://georeferencing.org/gazetteers.html>
- Genealogy Research Guides, Tips and Online Records <http://www.researchguides.net>

- **Genealogical Translations on Facebook**
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/GenealogicalTranslations>
- **Genealogy of Halychyna/Eastern Galicia**
<http://www.halgai.com>
- **Geneteka**
<https://geneteka.genealodzy.pl/index.php?op=se>
- **Google Translate**
<https://translate.google.com>
- **Hungaricana**
- <https://hungaricana.hu/en>
- **Immigrant History Research Center**
<https://cla.umn.edu/ihr>
- **Internet Archive (Wayback Machine)**
<https://archive.org/index.php>
- **JewishGen**
<https://www.jewishgen.org>
- **Library and Archives Canada**
<https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng>
- **LinktoYourRoots Project (Hamburg)**
<https://www.hamburg.com>
- **My Heritage (\$)**
<https://www.myheritage.com>
- **Odessa : A German-Russian: Genealogical Library**
<http://www.odessa3.org>
- **One-Step Webpages (Stephen P. Morse)**
<https://stevemorse.org>
- **Polish Genealogical Society of America**
<https://pgsa.org>
- **Polish Roots**
<https://www.polishroots.com>
- **Portafontium**
<https://www.portafontium.eu>
- **Poznan Project**
<http://poznan-project.psnc.pl>

- Prisoners of the First World War
<https://grandeguerre.icrc.org>
- Radix – Genealogical Research in Hungary
<http://www.bogardi.com/gen>
- Slovakia Genealogy Research Strategies
<http://www.iabsi.com/gen/public>
- Slovak Pride Database
<http://slovakpride.homestead.com>
- The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration
<https://www.archives.gov>
- United States Citizenship & Immigration Services
<https://www.uscis.gov>
- WorldGenWeb
<http://www.worldgenweb.org>

Archives: Selected Websites

- Archives Portal Europe <https://www.archivesportaleurope.net>
- Austria <https://www.oesta.gv.at>
- Croatian State Archives <http://www.arhiv.hr/en/index.htm>
- Czech National Archives <https://www.nacr.cz>
- Estonia <http://www.ra.ee/en/national-archives>
- Hungary <http://mlp.archivportal.hu/en/archives-of-hungary>
- Latvia <http://www.arhivi.lv/index.php?&3>
- Lithuania <http://www.arhivi.lv/index.php?&3>
- Poland <https://www.archiwa.gov.pl/pl>
- Romania <http://arhivelenationale.ro/site/?lan=1>
- Russia <http://russianarchives.com>
- Slovakia <https://www.minv.sk/?statne-archivy>
- Slovenia <https://www.gov.si/en/state-authorities/bodies-within-ministries/archives-of-the-republic-of-slovenia>
- Ukraine <https://archives.gov.ua/en>